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NINETY THREE
BY
VICTOR HUGO

NINETY-THREE

BY

VICTOR HUGO

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS FROM DESIGNS BY VICTOR HUGO, BAYARD, BRION, VIERGE, AND OTHER EMINENT FRENCH ARTISTS

IN TWO VOLUMES

VOL. I

GEORGE ROUTLEDGE AND SONS
LONDON AND NEW-YORK
1889

By the Same Author,
In Uniform Style.

LES MISÉRABLES, ... 5 VOLS.
TOILERS OF THE SEA, . . . 2 VOLS.
NÔTRE-DAME, ... 2 VOLS.
THE MAN WHO LAUGHS, . 2 VOLS.
NINETY-THREE, ... 2 VOLS.

GEORGE ROUTLEDGE & SONS,
LONDON AND NEW-YORK.

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AT SEA
Scott
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

VOLUME I

PART I

AT SEA

PAGE

BOOK I—THE WOOD OF LA SAUDRAIE 1

BOOK II—THE CORVETTE "CLAYMORE"

CHAP. I. ENGLAND AND FRANCE IN CONCERT 19
II. NIGHT ON THE VESSEL AND WITH THE PASSENGER . . . 23
III. NOBLE AND PLEBEIAN IN CONCERT 25
IV. TORMENTUM BELLI 33
V. VIS ET VIR 36
VI. THE TWO SCALES OF THE BALANCE 41
VII. HE WHO SETS SAIL PUTS INTO A LOTTERY 45
VIII. 9 = 380 49
IX. SOME ONE ESCAPES 54
X. DOES HE ESCAPE? 56

BOOK III—HALMALO

CHAP. I. SPEECH IS THE "WORD" 65
II. THE PEASANT'S MEMORY IS AS GOOD AS THE CAPTAIN'S SCIENCE 72

BOOK IV—TELLMARCH

PAGE

Chap. I. The Top of the Dune 85
II. Aures Habet, et non Audiet 89
III. Usefulness of Big Letters 91
IV. The Caimand 96
V. Signed Gauvain 102
VI. The Whirligigs of Civil War 107
VII. "No Mercy!" (Watchword of the Commune)—"No Quarter!" (Watchword of the Princes) . . . 112

PART II

IN PARIS

BOOK I—CIMOURDAIN

Chap. I. The Streets of Paris at that Time 123
II. Cimourdain 132
III. A Corner not dipped in Styx 139

BOOK II—THE PUBLIC-HOUSE OF THE RUE DU PAON

Chap. I. Minos, Æacus, and Rhadamanthus 145
II. Magna Testantur Voce per Umbras 149
III. A Stirring of the Inmost Nerves 167

BOOK III—THE CONVENTION

Chap. I. 179
II. 181
III. 183
IV. 188

PAGE

Chap. V. 195
VI. 197
VII. 201
VIII. 209
IX. 214
X. 216
XI. 223
XII. 225
XIII. 226

PART III

IN VENDEE

BOOK I—LA VENDÉE

Chap. I. The Forests 233
II. The Peasants 236
III. Connivance of Men and Forests 238
IV. Their Life Underground 242
V. Their Life in Warfare 244
VI. The Spirit of the Place passes into the Man . . . 252
VII. La Vendée ended Brittany 255

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

VOLUME I

	ARTIST	PAGE
At Sea	*H. Scott*	v
The Wood of La Saudraie	*G. Brion*	xv
Radoub	"	3
The Scouts	*D. Vierge*	5
"Halt!"	*E. Morin*	9
The Corvette "Claymore"	*D. Vierge*	17
The Representatives of the Princes	*Valnay*	21
On the Deck	*Gilbert*	22
Homage to the Chief	*E. Morin*	23
A Royalist Brutus	*Lix*	27
The Carronade	*D. Vierge*	33
The Battery	*Gilbert*	35
Vis et Vir	"	37
"Shoot this Man!"	*Férat*	43
Burial at Sea	*Gilbert*	44
Les Minquiers	*H. Scott*	47
The Pilot	*E. Morin*	51
A Man of Good Will	*Gilbert*	55
"Long Live the King!"	*E. Morin*	57
The Struggle Began	"	58
The Corvette Founders	*Gilbert*	59
Halmalo	*D. Maillart*	63
The Old Man Draws Himself Up	*Gilbert*	69
The Watchword	*Férat*	71
"I held my own against the Salt Tax Men"	*Gilbert*	75

	ARTIST	PAGE
The Sun had just Set	*H. Scott*	80
Tellmarch	*Férat*	83
Bay of Mount Saint Michael	*H. Scott*	85
The Journey	*Miss Patterson*	87
The Stone Cross	*G. Brion*	93
The *Carnichot*	*D. Vierge*	99
"I am the Marquis de Lantenac"	*E. Morin*	105
"Give your Orders, my Lord"	*Gilbert*	109
The Massacre of Herbe-en-Paille	*D. Vierge*	113
"Is there no one Here?"	"	117
In Paris	*Gilbert*	121
The Streets of Paris at that Time	"	125
Cimourdain	*D. Maillart*	129
The Priest	*G. Brion*	133
Pulling down the Statue of Louis XIV.	*Gilbert*	135
The Cabaret of the Rue du Paon	*D. Maillart*	143
The Rue du Paon	*Taylor*	146
Marat	* * *	147
The Cafés—La Rotunde	*Gilbert*	153
" Théâtre-Français	"	154
" Foy	"	155
"The Danger is in Paris"	"	156
The Club of the Jacobins	"	157
The Hornets of Finance	"	158
The Royal Family in the Temple	*Emile Bayard*	159
At Duplay	*Gilbert*	161
Dumouriez	* * *	163
Mirabeau	* * *	169
Signed: Robespierre, Danton, Marat	*Pélissier*	175
The Convention	*D. Vierge*	177
Tailpiece	*Prud'hon*	180
Valazé Shooting Himself in the Convention	* * *	188
Brissot—Barbaroux	*Gilbert*	189
Vergniaud—Saint Just	"	191
Joseph Chénier—David	"	192
Tallien	* * *	193
Sieyès—Camille Desmoulins	*Gilbert*	195
Carnot—Condorcet	"	197
Louis XVI.	* * *	199
The Trial of Louis XVI.	*E. Morin*	202
Marie Antoinette	"	203

	ARTIST	PAGE
The Scaffold of January 21	*E. Morin*	205
Charlotte Corday Killing Marat	* * *	207
The Carmagnole	*Gilbert*	210
Death of Robespierre	* * *	211
Cannons Pointed	*Gilbert*	213
Boissy D'Anglas	* * *	217
Elizabeth Duplay	* * *	219
Danton and Desmoulins before the Scaffold.	* * *	220
Medals of the Convention	* * *	225
In Vendée	*Karl Bodmer*	231
Twilight	*Victor Hugo*	235
La Vendée	*A. Lauçon*	237
In the Woods	*Karl Bodmer*	241
On the Steps of St. Roche	* * *	243
Cathelineau	*Rion*	245
"They Rode from all Sides"	"	248
Charette and the Representatives of the People	*F. Lix*	249
Charette	* * *	253
They were Barred Also	*Rion*	254
Death of Rochejacquelein	* * *	257
Thickets	*Victor Hugo*	260

THE WOOD OF LA SAUDRIE.

NINETY-THREE

PART I

AT SEA

BOOK I

THE WOOD OF LA SAUDRAIE

DURING the last days of May, 1793, one of the Parisian regiments thrown into Brittany by Santerre reconnoitred the dreaded wood of La Saudraie in Astillé. There were not more than three hundred men, for the battalion had been well-nigh swept off by this fierce war. It was the period when, after Argonne, Jemmapes, and Valmy, of the first regiment of Paris, which had numbered six hundred volunteers, there remained twenty-seven men; of the second, thirty-three; and of the third, fifty-seven. It was a time of epic conflict.

The regiments dispatched from Paris into Vendée counted nine hundred and twelve men. Each regiment took with it three pieces of cannon. They had been quickly put on foot. On the 25th of April, Gohier being minister of justice and Bouchotte minister of war, the section of the Bon Conseil proposed sending battalions of volunteers into Vendée. Lubin, member of the commune, made the report. On

the 1st of May, Santerre was ready to marshal twelve thousand soldiers, thirty field-pieces, and a troop of gunners. These battalions, formed so quickly, were formed so well that they serve as models to-day; regiments of the line are constructed after their model; they changed the old proportion between the number of soldiers and non-commissioned officers.

On the 28th of April the commune of Paris gave this password to the volunteers of Santerre: *No mercy; no quarter.* At the end of May, of the twelve thousand who left Paris, eight thousand were dead.

The regiment engaged in the wood of La Saudraie held itself on the watch. There was no appearance of haste. Each man looked at once to the right and to the left, before and behind. Kleber has said, "*A soldier has an eye in his back.*" They had been on foot for a long while. What time could it be? What period of the day was it? It would have been difficult to say, for there is always a sort of dusk in such savage thickets, and it was never light in that wood.

The forest of La Saudraie was tragic. It was in its copses that, from the month of November, 1792, civil war commenced its crimes. Mousqueton, the ferocious cripple, came out of its fatal shades. The list of the murders that had been committed there was enough to make one's hair stand on end. There was no place more to be dreaded. The soldiers moved cautiously forward. The depths were full of flowers; on each side was a trembling wall of branches and dew-wet leaves. Here and there rays of sunlight pierced the green shadows. The gladiola, that flame of the marshes, the meadow narcissus, the little wood daisy, harbinger of spring, and the vernal crocus, embroidered the thick carpet of vegetation, crowded with every form of moss, from that resembling velvet *(chenille)* to that which looks like a star. The soldiers advanced in silence, step by step, pushing the brushwood softly aside. The birds twittered above the bayonets.

In former peaceable times La Saudraie was a favorite place for the *Houiche-ba*, the hunting of birds by night; now they hunted men there.

The thicket was one of birch-trees, beeches, and oaks; the ground flat; the thick moss and grass deadened the sound of the men's steps; there were no paths, or only blind ones, which quickly disappeared among the holly, wild sloes, ferns, hedges of rest-harrow, and high brambles. It would have been impossible to distinguish a man ten steps off.

Now and then a heron or a moor-hen flew through the branches, indicating the neighborhood of marshes.

They pushed forward. They went at random, with uneasiness, fearing to find that which they sought.

RADOUB.

From time to time they came upon traces of encampments; burned spots, trampled grass, sticks arranged crosswise, branches stained with blood. Here soup had been made—there, mass had been said—yonder, they had dressed wounds. But all human beings had disappeared. Where were they? Very far off, perhaps; perhaps quite near, hidden, blunderbuss in hand. The wood seemed deserted. The regiment redoubled its prudence. Solitude—hence distrust. They saw no one:

so much more reason for fearing some one. They had to do with a forest with a bad name. An ambush was probable.

Thirty grenadiers, detached as scouts, and commanded by a sergeant, marched at a considerable distance in front of the main body; the vivandière of the battalion accompanied them. The vivandières willingly join the vanguard; they run risks, but they have the chance of seeing whatever happens. Curiosity is one of the forms of feminine bravery.

Suddenly the soldiers of this little advance party started like hunters who have neared the hiding-place of their prey. They had heard some-

thing like a breathing from the centre of a thicket, and seemed to perceive a movement among the branches. The soldiers made signals.

In the species of watch and search confided to scouts, the officers have small need to interfere; the right thing seems done by instinct.

In less than a minute the spot where the movement had been noticed was surrounded; a line of pointed muskets encircled it; the obscure centre of the thicket was covered on all sides at the same instant; the soldiers, finger on trigger, eye on the suspected spot, only waited for the sergeant's order. Notwithstanding this, the vivandière ventured to peer through the underbrush, and at the moment when the sergeant was about to cry "Fire!" this woman cried, "Halt!"

Turning toward the soldiers, she added—"Do not fire, comrades!"

She plunged into the thicket; the men followed.

There was, in truth, some one there.

In the thickest of the brake, on the edge of one of those little round clearings left by the fires of the charcoal-burners, in a sort of recess among the branches—a kind of chamber of foliage—half open like an alcove—a woman was seated on the moss, holding to her breast a nursing babe, while the fair heads of two sleeping children rested on her knees.

This was the ambush.

"What are you doing here, you?" cried the vivandière.

The woman lifted her head.

The vivandière added furiously:

"Are you mad, that you are there? A little more and you would have been blown to pieces!"

Then she addressed herself to the soldiers—

"It is a woman."

"Well, that is plain to be seen," said a grenadier.

The vivandière continued:

"To come into the wood to get yourself massacred! The idea of such stupidity!"

The woman, stunned, petrified with fear, looked about like one in a dream at these guns, these sabres, these bayonets, these savage faces.

The two children awoke, and cried.

"I am hungry," said the first.

"I am afraid," said the other.

The baby was still suckling; the vivandière addressed it.

"You are in the right of it," said she.

The mother was dumb with terror. The sergeant cried out to her:

"Do not be afraid; we are the battalion of the *Bonnet Rouge*."

The woman trembled from head to foot. She stared at the sergeant,

of whose rough visage there was nothing visible but the mustaches, the brows, and two burning coals for eyes.

"Formerly the battalion of the Red Cross," added the vivandière.

The sergeant continued: "Who are you, madame?"

The woman scanned him, terrified. She was slender, young, pale, and in rags; she wore the large hood and woolen cloak of the Breton peasant, fastened about her neck by a string. She left her bosom exposed with the indifference of an animal. Her feet, shoeless and stockingless, were bleeding.

"It is a beggar," said the sergeant.

The vivandière began anew, in a voice at once soldierly and feminine, but sweet:

"What is your name?"

The woman stammered so that she was scarcely intelligible.

"Michelle Fléchard."

The vivandière stroked the little head of the sleeping babe with her large hand.

"What is the age of this mite?" demanded she.

The mother did not understand. The vivandière persisted:

"I ask you how old is it?"

"Ah!" said the mother; "eighteen months."

"It is old," said the vivandière; "it ought not to suckle any longer. You must wean it; we will give it soup."

The mother began to feel a certain confidence; the two children, who had awakened, were rather curious than scared—they admired the plumes of the soldiers.

"Ah!" said the mother, "they are very hungry."

Then she added—"I have no more milk."

"We will give them something to eat," cried the sergeant; "and you, too. But that's not all. What are your political opinions?"

The woman looked at him, but did not reply.

"Did you hear my question?"

She stammered:

"I was put into a convent very young—but I am married—I am not a nun. The sisters taught me to speak French. The village was set on fire. We ran away so quickly that I had not time to put on my shoes."

"I ask you what are your political opinions?"

"I don't know what that means."

The sergeant continued:

"There are such things as female spies. We shoot spies. Come—speak! You are not a gipsy? Which is your side?"

She still looked at him as if she did not understand.

The sergeant repeated:

"Which is your side?"

"I do not know," she said.

"How? You do not know your own country?"

"Ah, my country! Oh, yes, I know that."

"Well, where is it?"

The woman replied:

"The farm of Siscoignard, in the parish of Azé."

It was the sergeant's turn to be stupefied. He remained thoughtful for a moment, then resumed: "You say——?"

"Siscoignard."

"That is not a country."

"It is my country," said the woman; and added, after an instant's reflection, "I understand, sir. You are from France; I belong to Brittany."

"Well?"

"It is not the same neighborhood."

"But it is the same country," cried the sergeant.

The woman only repeated:

"I am from Siscoignard."

"Siscoignard, be it," returned the sergeant. "Your family belonged there?"

"Yes."

"What is their occupation?"

"They are all dead; I have nobody left."

The sergeant, who thought himself a fine talker, continued his interrogatories:

"What? the devil! One has relations, or one has had! Who are you? Speak!"

The woman listened, astounded by this—"*Or one has had!*" which was more like the growl of an animal than any human sound.

The vivandière felt the necessity of interfering. She began again to caress the babe, and to pat the cheeks of the two other children.

"How do you call the baby?" she asked. "It is a little girl—this one?"

The mother replied, "Georgette."

"And the eldest fellow? For he is a man, the small rascal!"

"René-Jean."

"And the younger? He is a man, too, and chubby-faced into the bargain."

"Gros-Alain," said the mother.

"They are pretty little fellows," said the vivandière; "they already look as if they were somebody!"

HALT!

Still the sergeant persisted. "Now speak, madame! Have you a house?"

"I had one."

"Where was it?"

"At Azé."

"Why are you not in your house?"

"Because they burned it."

"Who?"

"I do not know—a battle."

"Where did you come from?"

"From there."

"Where are you going?"

"I don't know."

"Get to the facts! Who are you?"

"I don't know."

"You don't know who you are?"

"We are people who are running away."

"What party do you belong to?"

"I don't know."

"Are you Blues? Are you Whites? Who are you with?"

"I am with my children."

There was a pause. The vivandière said:

"As for me, I have no children; I have not had time."

The sergeant began again:

"But your parents? See here, madame! give us the facts about your parents. My name is Radoub; I am a sergeant, from the street of Cherche Midi; my father and mother belonged there. I can talk about my parents; tell us about yours. Who were they?"

"Their name was Fléchard—that is all."

"Yes; the Fléchards are the Fléchards, just as the Radoubs are the Radoubs. But people have a calling. What was your parents' calling? What was their business, these Fléchards of yours?"

"They were laborers. My father was sickly, and could not work on account of a beating that the lord—his lord—our lord—had given to him. It was a kindness, for my father had poached a rabbit—a thing for which one was condemned to death—but the lord showed him mercy, and said, 'You need only give him a hundred blows with a stick;' and my father was left crippled."

"And then?"

"My grandfather was a Huguenot. The curé had him sent to the galleys. I was very little at the time."

"And then?"

"My husband's father smuggled salt. The king had him hung."

"And your husband—what did he do?"

"Lately he fought."

"For whom?"

"For the king."

"And afterward?"

"Well, for his lordship."

"And next?"

"Well, then for the curé."

"A thousand names of brutes!" cried a grenadier.

The woman gave a start of terror.

"You see, madame, we are Parisians," said the vivandière, graciously.

The woman clasped her hands, and exclaimed:

"Oh, my God and blessed Lord!"

"No superstitious ejaculations!" growled the sergeant.

The vivandière seated herself by the woman, and drew the eldest child between her knees. He submitted quietly. Children show confidence as they do distrust, without any apparent reason; some internal monitor warns them.

"My poor, good woman of this neighborhood," said the vivandière, "your brats are very pretty—babies are always that. I can guess their ages. The big one is four years old; his brother is three. Upon my word, the little sucking poppet is a greedy one! Oh, the monster! Will you stop eating up your mother? See here, madame, do not be afraid. You ought to join the battalion—do like me. I call myself Houzarde. It is a nickname; but I like Houzarde better than being called Mamzelle Bicorneau, like my mother. I am the canteen-woman; that is the same as saying, she who offers drink when they are firing and stabbing. Our feet are about the same size. I will give you a pair of my shoes. I was in Paris the 10th of August. I gave Westermann drink too. How things went! I saw Louis XVI. guillotined—Louis Capet, as they call him. It was against his will. Only just listen, now! To think that the 13th of January he roasted chestnuts and laughed with his family. When they forced him down on the see-saw, as they say, he had neither coat nor shoes, nothing but his shirt, a quilted waistcoat, gray cloth breeches, and gray silk stockings. I saw that, I did! The hackney-coach they brought him in was painted green. See here; come with us; the battalion are good fellows; you shall be canteen number two; I will teach you the business. Oh, it is very simple! You have your can and your hand-bell; away you go into the hubbub, with the platoons firing, the cannon thundering—into

the thickest of the row—and you cry, 'Who'll have a drop to drink, my children?' It's no more trouble than that. I give everybody and anybody a sup—yes, indeed—Whites the same as Blues, though I am a Blue myself, and a good Blue, too; but I serve them all alike. Wounded men are all thirsty. They die without any difference of opinions. Dying fellows ought to shake hands. How silly it is to go fighting! Do you come with us? If I am killed, you will step into my place. You see I am only so-so to look at; but I am a good woman, and a brave chap. Don't you be afraid."

When the vivandière ceased speaking, the woman murmured:

"Our neighbor was called Marie Jeanne, and our servant was named Marie Claude."

In the meantime the sergeant reprimanded the grenadier:

"Hold your tongue! You frighten madame. One does not swear before ladies."

"All the same; it is a downright butchery for an honest man to hear about," replied the grenadier; "and to see Chinese Iroquois, that have had their fathers-in-law crippled by a lord, their grandfathers sent to the galleys by the priest, and their fathers hung by the king, and who fight—name of the little Black Man!—and mix themselves up with revolts, and get smashed for his lordship, the priest, and the king!"

"Silence in the ranks!" cried the sergeant.

"A man may hold his tongue, sergeant," returned the grenadier; "but that doesn't hinder the fact that it's a pity to see a pretty woman like this running the risk of getting her neck broken for the sake of a dirty robber."

"Grenadier," said the sergeant, "we are not in the Pike-club of Paris—no eloquence!"

He turned toward the woman.

"And your husband, madame? What is he at? What has become of him?"

"There hasn't anything become of him, because they killed him."

"Where did that happen?"

"In the hedge."

"When?"

"Three days ago."

"Who did it?"

"I don't know."

"How? You do not know who killed your husband?"

"No."

"Was it a Blue? Was it a White?"

"It was a bullet."

"Three days ago?"

"Yes."

"In what direction?"

"Toward Ernée. My husband fell. That is all!"

"And what have you been doing since your husband was killed?"

"I bear away my children."

"Where are you taking them?"

"Straight ahead."

"Where do you sleep?"

"On the ground."

"What do you eat?"

"Nothing."

The sergeant made that military grimace which makes the mustache touch the nose.

"Nothing?"

"That is to say, sloes and dried berries left from last year, myrtle seeds, and fern shoots."

"Faith! you might as well say nothing."

The eldest of the children, who seemed to understand, said, "I am hungry."

The sergeant took a bit of regulation bread from his pocket, and handed it to the mother. She broke the bread into two fragments, and gave them to the children, who ate with avidity.

"She has kept none for herself," grumbled the sergeant.

"Because she is not hungry," said a soldier.

"Because she is a mother," said the sergeant.

The children interrupted the dialogue.

"I want to drink," cried one.

"I want to drink," repeated the other.

"Is there no brook in this devil's wood?" asked the sergeant.

The vivandière took the brass cup which hung at her belt beside her hand-bell, turned the cock of the can she carried slung over her shoulder, poured a few drops into the cup, and held it to the children's lips in turn.

The first drank and made a grimace. The second drank and spat it out.

"Nevertheless it is good," said the vivandière.

"Is it some of the old cut-throat?" asked the sergeant.

"Yes, and the best; but these are peasants." And she wiped her cup.

The sergeant resumed:

"And so, madame, you are trying to escape?"

"There is nothing else left for me to do!"

"Across fields—going whichever way chance directs?"

"I run with all my might—then I walk—then I fall."

"Poor villager!" said the vivandière.

"The people fight," stammered the woman. "They are shooting all around me. I do not know what it is they wish. They killed my husband; that is all I understood."

The sergeant grounded the butt of his musket till the earth rang, and cried:

"What a beast of a war—in the hangman's name!"

The woman continued:

"Last night we slept in an *émousse*."

"All four?"

"All four."

"Slept?"

"Slept."

"Then," said the sergeant, "you slept standing."

He turned toward the soldiers—"Comrades, what these savages call an *émousse* is an old hollow tree-trunk that a man may fit himself into as if it were a sheath. But what would you? We can not all be Parisians."

"Slept in a hollow tree?" exclaimed the vivandière. "And with three children!"

"And," added the sergeant, "when the little ones howled, it must have been odd to anybody passing by and seeing nothing whatever, to hear a tree cry, 'Papa! mamma!'"

"Luckily it is summer," sighed the woman.

She looked down upon the ground in silent resignation, her eyes filled with the bewilderment of wretchedness.

The soldiers made a silent circle round this group of misery. A widow, three orphans; flight, abandonment, solitude, war muttering around the horizon, hunger, thirst; no other nourishment than the herbs of the field, no other roof than that of heaven.

The sergeant approached the woman, and fixed his eye on the sucking baby. The little one left the breast, turned its head gently, gazing with its beautiful blue orbs into the formidable hairy face, bristling and wild, which bent toward it, and began to smile.

The sergeant raised himself, and they saw a great tear roll down his cheek and cling like a pearl to the end of his mustache.

He lifted his voice:

"Comrades, from all this I conclude that the regiment is going to become a father. Is it agreed? We adopt these three children?"

"Hurrah for the Republic!" chorused the grenadiers.

"It is decided!" said the sergeant.

He stretched his two hands above the mother and her babes.

"Behold the children of the battalion of the *Bonnet Rouge!*"

The vivandière leaped for joy.

"Three heads under one bonnet!" cried she.

Then she burst into sobs, embraced the poor widow wildly, and said to her, "What a rogue the little girl looks already!"

"*Vive la République!*" repeated the soldiers.

And the sergeant said to the mother:

"Come, citizeness!"

THE CORVETTE
CLAYMORE

BOOK II

THE CORVETTE "CLAYMORE"

CHAPTER I

ENGLAND AND FRANCE IN CONCERT

IN the spring of 1793, at the moment when France, simultaneously attacked on all its frontiers, suffered the pathetic distraction of the downfall of the Girondists, this was what happened in the Channel Islands.

At Jersey, on the evening of the 1st of June, about an hour before sunset, a corvette set sail from the solitary little Bay of Bonnenuit, in that kind of foggy weather which is favorable to flight because pursuit is rendered dangerous. The vessel was manned by a French crew, though it made part of the English fleet stationed on the look-out at the eastern point of the island. The Prince de la Tour d'Auvergne, who was of the house of Bouillon, commanded the English flotilla, and it was by his orders, and for an urgent and special service, that the corvette had been detached.

This vessel, entered at Trinity House under the name of the *Claymore*, had the appearance of a transport or trader, but was in reality a war corvette. She had the heavy, pacific look of a merchantman, but it would not have been safe to trust to that. She had been built for a double purpose—cunning and strength: to deceive if possible, to fight

if necessary. For the service before her this night, the lading of the lower deck had been replaced by thirty carronades of heavy calibre. Either because a storm was feared, or because it was desirable to prevent the vessel having a suspicious appearance, these carronades were housed—that is to say, securely fastened within by triple chains, and the hatches above shut close. Nothing was to be seen from without. The ports were blinded; the slides closed; it was as if the corvette had put on a mask. Armed corvettes only carry guns on the upper deck; but this one, built for surprise and cunning, had the deck free, and was able, as we have just seen, to carry a battery below. The *Claymore* was after a heavy, squat model, but a good sailer nevertheless—the hull of the most solid sort used in the English navy; and in battle was almost as valuable as a frigate, though for mizzen she had only a small mast of brigantine rig. Her rudder, of a peculiar and scientific form, had a curved frame, of unique shape, which cost fifty pounds sterling in the dock-yards of Southampton.

The crew, all French, was composed of refugee officers and deserter sailors. They were tried men; not one but was a good sailor, good soldier, and good royalist. They had a threefold fanaticism—for ship, sword, and king.

A half-regiment of marines, that could be disembarked in case of need, was added to the crew.

The corvette *Claymore* had as captain a chevalier of Saint Louis, Count du Boisberthelot, one of the best officers of the old Royal Navy; for second, the Chevalier La Vieuville, who had commanded a company of French guards in which Hoche was sergeant; and for pilot, Philip Gacquoil, the most skillful mariner in Jersey.

It was evident that the vessel had unusual business on hand. Indeed, a man who had just come on board had the air of one entering upon an adventure. He was a tall old man, upright and robust, with a severe countenance; whose age it would have been difficult to guess accurately, for he seemed at once old and young; one of those men who are full of years and of vigor; who have white hair on their heads and lightning in their glance; forty in point of energy and eighty in power and authority. As he came on deck his sea-cloak blew open, exposing his large, loose breeches and top-boots, and a goat-skin vest which had one side tanned and embroidered with silk, while on the other the hair was left rough and bristling—a complete costume of the Breton peasant. These old-fashioned jackets answered alike for working and holidays: they could be turned to show the hairy or embroidered side, as one pleased; goat-skin all the week, gala accoutrements on Sunday. As if to increase a resemblance which had been carefully studied, the peasant

dress worn by the old man was threadbare at the knees and elbows, and seemed to have been long in use, while his coarse cloak might have belonged to a fisherman. He had on his head the round hat of the period—high, with a broad rim which, when turned down, gave the wearer a rustic look, but took a military air when fastened up at the side with a loop and a cockade. The old man wore his hat with the brim flattened forward, peasant fashion, without either tassels or cockade.

Lord Balcarras, the governor of the island, and the Prince de la Tour d'Auvergne, had in person conducted and installed him on board. The secret agent of the princes, Gélambre, formerly one of the Count d'Artois' body-guard, had superintended the arrangement of the cabin; and, although himself a nobleman, pushed courtesy and respect so far as to walk behind the old man carrying his portmanteau. When they left him to go ashore again, Monsieur de Gélambre saluted the peasant profoundly; Lord Balcarras said to him, "Good luck, general!" and the Prince de la Tour d'Auvergne added, "*Au revoir*, my cousin!"

"The peasant" was the name by which the crew immediately designated their passenger during the short dialogues which seamen hold;

but, without understanding further about the matter, they comprehended that he was no more a peasant than the corvette was a common sloop.

There was little wind. The *Claymore* left Bonnenuit, and passed in front of Boulay Bay, and was for some time in sight, tacking to windward; then she lessened in the gathering night, and finally disappeared.

An hour after, Gélambre, having returned to his house at Saint Helier, sent by the Southampton express the following lines to the Count d'Artois, at the Duke of York's head-quarters: "Monseigneur,—The departure has just taken place. Success certain. In eight days the whole coast will be on fire from Granville to Saint Malo."

Four days previous, Prieur, the representative of Marne, on a mission to the army along the coast of Cherbourg, and momentarily residing at Granville, had received by a secret emissary this message, written in the same hand as the dispatch above:

"Citizen Representative,—On the 1st of June, at the hour when the tide serves, the war corvette *Claymore*, with a masked battery, will set sail for the purpose of landing upon the shore of France a man of whom this is a description: tall, old, white hair, peasant's dress, hands of an aristocrat. I will send you more details to-morrow. He will land on the morning of the 2d. Warn the cruisers; capture the corvette; guillotine the man."

CHAPTER II

NIGHT ON THE VESSEL AND WITH THE PASSENGER

THE corvette, instead of going south and making for Saint Catherine's, headed north, then veered to the west, and resolutely entered the arm of the sea, between Sark and Jersey, called the Passage de la Deronte. At that time there was no light-house upon any point along either coast. The sun had set clear; the night was dark—darker than summer nights ordinarily are;

there was a moon, but vast clouds, rather of the equinox than the solstice, veiled the sky, and according to all appearance the moon would not be visible till she touched the horizon at the moment of setting. A few clouds hung low upon the water and covered it with mist.

All this obscurity was favorable.

The intention of Pilot Gacquoil was to leave Jersey on the left and Guernsey on the right, and to gain, by bold sailing between the Hanois and the Douvree, some bay of the Saint Malo shore—a route less short than that by the Minquiers, but safer, as the French cruisers had stand-

ing orders to keep an especially keen watch between Saint Helier and Granville. If the wind were favorable, and nothing occurred, Gacquoil hoped by setting all sail to touch the French coast at daybreak.

All went well. The corvette had passed Gros-Nez. Toward nine o'clock the weather looked sulky, as sailors say, and there were wind and sea, but the wind was good and the sea strong without being violent. Still, now and then the waves swept the vessel's bows.

The "peasant," whom Lord Balcarras had called "General," and whom the Prince de la Tour d'Auvergne addressed as "My cousin," had a sailor's footing, and paced the deck with tranquil gravity. He did not even seem to notice that the corvette rocked considerably. From time to time he took a cake of chocolate out of his pocket and munched a morsel: his white hair did not prevent his having all his teeth.

He spoke to no one, except now and then a few low, quick words to the captain, who listened with deference, and seemed to consider his passenger, rather than himself, the commander.

The *Claymore*, ably piloted, skirted unperceived in the fog the long escarpment north of Jersey, hugging the shore on account of the formidable reef Pierres de Leeq, which is in the middle of the channel between Jersey and Sark. Gacquoil, standing at the helm, signaled in turn the Grève de Leeq, Gros-Nez, and Plémont, and slipped the corvette along among this chain of reefs, feeling his way to a certain extent, but with certitude, like a man familiar with the course and acquainted with the disposition of the sea. The corvette had no light forward, from a fear of betraying its passage through these guarded waters. The fog was a cause for rejoicing. They reached the Grande Étaque. The mist was so thick that the outlines of the lofty pinnacle could scarcely be made out. Ten o'clock was heard to sound from the belfry of Saint Ouen, a proof that the wind was still abaft. All was yet going well. The sea grew rougher on account of the neighborhood of La Corbière.

A little after ten. Count de Boisberthelot and the Chevalier La Vieuville reconducted the man in the peasant's garb to his cabin, which was in reality the captain's state-room. As he went in, he said to them in a low voice:

"Gentlemen, you understand the importance of secrecy. Silence up to the moment of explosion. You two are the only ones here who know my name."

"We will carry it with us to the tomb," replied Boisberthelot.

"As for me," added the old man, "were I in face of death, I would not tell it."

He entered his cabin.

CHAPTER III

NOBLE AND PLEBEIAN IN CONCERT

THE commander and the second officer returned on deck and walked up and down, side by side, in conversation. They were evidently talking of their passenger, and this was the dialogue which the wind dispersed among the shadows.

Boisberthelot grumbled in a half-voice in the ear of La Vieuville:

"We shall see if he is really a leader."

La Vieuville replied, "In the meantime he is a prince."

"Almost."

"Nobleman in France, but prince in Brittany."

"Like the La Trémoilles; like the Rohans."

"With whom he is connected."

Boisberthelot resumed:

"In France, and in the king's carriages, he is marquis, as I am count, and you are chevalier."

"The carriages are far off!" cried La Vieuville. "We have got to the tumbril."

There was a silence.

Boisberthelot began again:

"For lack of a French prince, a Breton one is taken."

"For lack of thrushes—no, for want of an eagle—a crow is chosen."

"I should prefer a vulture," said Boisberthelot.

And La Vieuville retorted:

"Yes, indeed! a beak and talons."

"We shall see."

"Yes," resumed La Vieuville, "it is time there was a head. I am of Tinteniac's opinion—'*A true chief, and—gunpowder!*' See, commander; I know nearly all the leaders, possible and impossible—those of yesterday, those of to-day, and those of to-morrow: there is not one

with the sort of head-piece we need. In that accursed Vendée it wants a genèral who is a lawyer at the same time. He must worry the enemy, dispute every mill, thicket, ditch, pebble; quarrel with him; take advantage of every thing; see to every thing; slaughter plentifully; make examples; be sleepless, pitiless. At this hour there are heroes among that army of peasants, but there are no captains. D'Elbée is *nil;* Lescure is ailing; Bonchampe shows mercy—he is kind, that means stupid; La Rochejacquelein is a magnificent sub-lieutenant; Silz an officer for open country, unfit for a war of expedients; Cathelineau is a simple carter; Stofflet is a cunning gamekeeper; Bérard is inept; Boulainvilliers is ridiculous; Charette is shocking. And I do not speak of the barber Gaston. For, in the name of Mars, what is the good of opposing the Revolution, and what is the difference between the republicans and ourselves, if we set hairdressers to command noblemen?"

"You see that beast of a Revolution has infected us also."

"An itch that France has caught."

"An itch of the Third Estate," replied Boisberthelot. "It is only England that can cure us of it."

"And she will cure us, do not doubt it, captain."

"In the meanwhile it is ugly."

"Indeed, yes. Clowns everywhere! The monarchy which has for commander-in-chief Stofflet, the gamekeeper of M. De Maulevrier, has nothing to envy in the republic that has for minister Pache, son of the Duke de Castries' porter. What men this Vendean war brings out against each other! On one side Santerre the brewer, on the other Gaston the wigmaker!"

"My dear Vieuville, I have a certain respect for Gaston. He did not conduct himself ill in his command of Gueménée. He very neatly shot three hundred Blues, after making them dig their own graves."

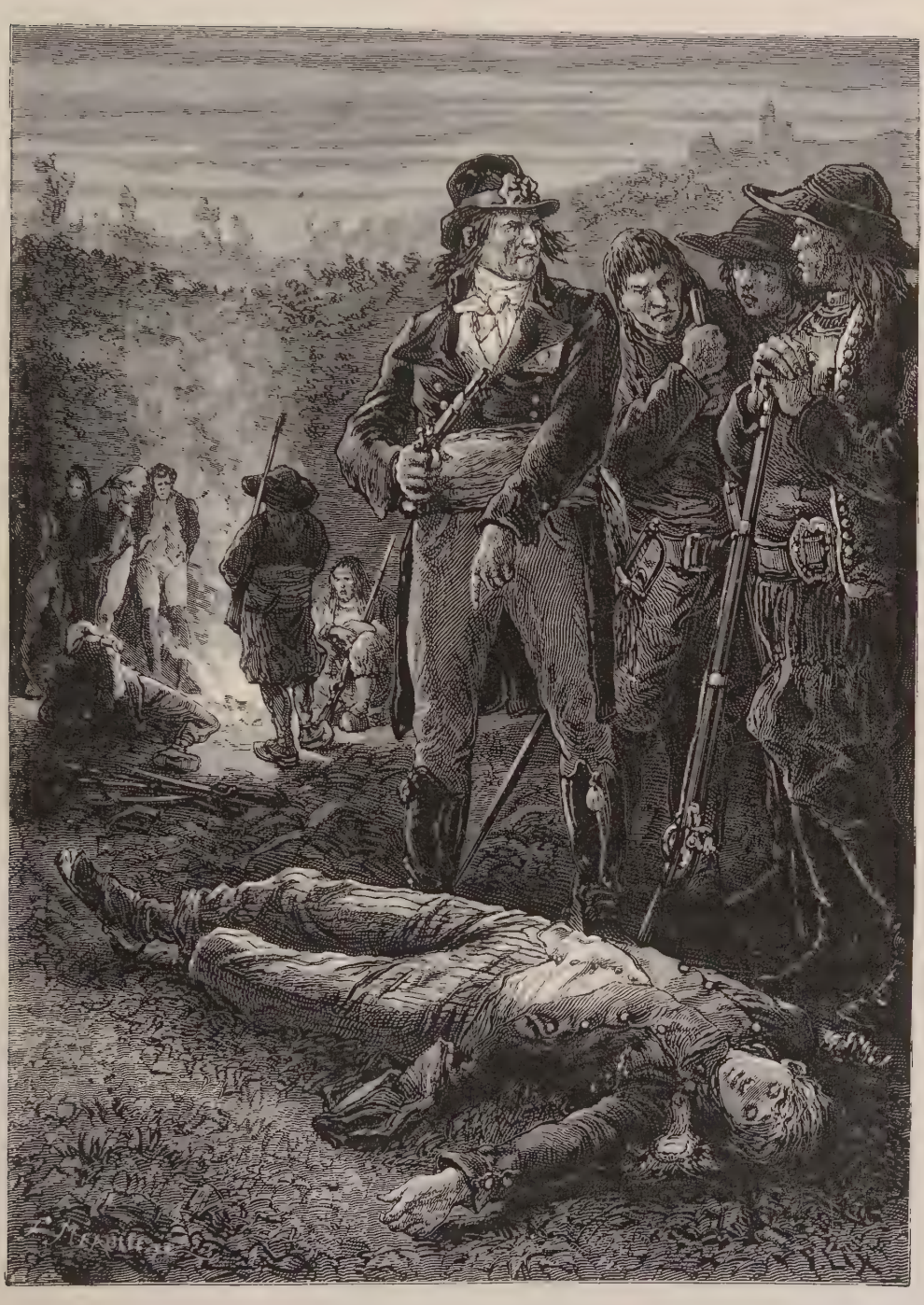
"Well and good; but I could have done that as well as he."

"Zounds! no doubt; and I also."

"The great acts of war," resumed La Vieuville, "require to be undertaken by noblemen. They are matters for knights and not hairdressers."

"Still there are some estimable men among this 'Third Estate,'" returned Boisberthelot. "Take, for example, Joby the clockmaker. He had been a sergeant in a Flanders regiment; he gets himself made a Vendean chief; he commands a coast band; he has a son who is a Republican, and while the father serves among the Whites, the son serves among the Blues. Encounter. Battle. The father takes the son prisoner, and blows out his brains."

"He's a good one," said La Vieuville.



"A ROYALIST BRUTUS."

"A royalist Brutus," replied Boisberthelot.

"All that does not hinder the fact that it is insupportable to be commanded by a Coquereau, a Jean-Jean, a Mouline, a Focart, a Bouju, a Chouppes!"

"My dear chevalier, the other side is equally disgusted. We are full of plebeians—they are full of nobles. Do you suppose the *sans-culottes* are content to be commanded by the Count de Canclaux, the Viscount de Miranda, the Viscount de Beauharnais, the Count de Valence, the Marquis de Custine, and the Duke de Biron!"

"What a hash!"

"And the Duke de Chartres!"

"Son of Égalité. Ah, then, when will he ever be king?"

"Never."

"He mounts toward the throne. He is aided by his crimes."

"And held back by his vices," said Boisberthelot.

There was silence again; then Boisberthelot continued:

"Still he tried to bring about a reconciliation. He went to see the king. I was at Versailles when somebody spat on his back."

"From the top of the grand staircase?"

"Yes."

"It was well done."

"We call him Bourbon the Bourbeux."

"He is bald; he has pimples; he is a regicide—poh!"

Then La Vieuville added:

"I was at Ouessant with him."

"On the *Saint Esprit?*"

"Yes."

"If he had obeyed the signal that the Admiral d'Orvilliers made him, to keep to the windward, he would have kept the English from passing."

"Certainly."

"Is it true that he was hidden at the bottom of the hold?"

"No; but it must be said all the same."

And La Vieuville burst out laughing.

Boisberthelot observed:

"There are idiots enough! Hold! that Boulainvilliers you were speaking of, La Vieuville. I knew him. I had a chance of studying him. In the beginning, the peasants were armed with pikes: if he did not get it into his head to make pikemen of them! He wanted to teach them the manual of exercise, '*de la pique-en-biais et de la pique-traînante-le-fer-dévant.*' He dreamed of transforming those savages into soldiers of the line. He proposed to show them how to mass battalions

and form hollow squares. He jabbered the old-fashioned military dialect to them; for chief of a squad, he said *un cap d'escade*, which was the appellation of corporals under Louis XIV. He persisted in forming a regiment of those poachers: he had regular companies. The sergeants ranged themselves in a circle every evening to take the countersign from the colonel's sergeant, who whispered it to the sergeant of the lieutenants; he repeated it to his neighbor, and he to the man nearest; and so on, from ear to ear, down to the last. He cashiered an officer because he did not stand bareheaded to receive the watchword from the sergeant's mouth. You can fancy how all succeeded. The booby could not understand that peasants must be led peasant fashion, and that one cannot make drilled soldiers out of woodchoppers. Yes, I knew that Boulainvilliers."

They moved on a few steps, each pursuing his own thoughts. Then the conversation was renewed.

"By the way, is it true that Dampierre is killed?"

"Yes, commander."

"Before Condé?"

"At the camp of Pamars—by a gunshot."

Boisberthelot sighed.

"The Count de Dampierre! Yet another of ours who went over to them!"

"A good journey to him," said La Vieuville.

"And the princesses—where are they?"

"At Trieste."

"Still?"

"Still. Ah, this republic!" cried Vieuville. "What havoc from such slight consequences! When one thinks that this Revolution was caused by the deficit of a few millions!"

"Distrust small outbreaks," said Boisberthelot.

"Every thing is going badly," resumed La Vieuville.

"Yes; La Rouarie is dead; Du Dresnay is an idiot. What pitiful leaders all those bishops are—that Concy, Bishop of Rochelle; that Beaupoil Saint-Aulaire, Bishop of Poitiers; that Mercy, Bishop of Luçon and lover of Madame de l'Eschasserie——"

"Whose name is Servanteau, you know, commander; L'Eschasserie is the name of an estate."

"And that false Bishop of Agra—who is curé of I know not what."

"Of Dol. He is called Guillot de Folleville. At least he is brave, and he fights."

"Priests when soldiers are needed! Bishops who are not bishops! Generals who are no generals!"

La Vieuville interrupted Boisberthelot.

"Commander, have you the *Moniteur* in your cabin?"

"Yes."

"What are they playing in Paris just now?"

"*Adèle and Poulin*, and *The Cavern*."

"I should like to see that."

"You will be able to. We shall be at Paris in a month."

Boisberthelot reflected a moment, and added:

"At the latest. Mr. Windham said so to Lord Hood."

"But then, captain, every thing is not going so ill."

"Zounds! every thing would go well, on condition that the war in Brittany could be properly conducted."

La Vieuville shook his head.

"Commander," he asked, "do we land the marines?"

"Yes; if the coast is for us—not if it is hostile. Sometimes war must break down doors, sometimes slip in quietly. Civil war ought always to have a false key in its pocket. We shall do all in our power. The most important is the chief."

Then Boisberthelot added thoughtfully:

"La Vieuville, what do you think of the Chevalier de Dieugie?"

"The younger?"

"Yes."

"For a leader?"

"Yes."

"That he is another officer for open country and pitched battles. Only the peasant understands the thickets."

"Then resign yourself to General Stofflet and to General Cathelineau."

La Vieuville mused a while, and then said, "It needs a prince; a prince of France; a prince of the blood—a true prince."

"Why? Whoever says prince——"

"Says poltroon. I know it, captain. But one is needed for the effect on the big stupid eyes of the country lads."

"My dear chevalier, the princes will not come."

"We will get on without them."

Boisberthelot pressed his hand upon his forehead with the mechanical movement of a man endeavoring to bring out some idea. He exclaimed:

"Well, let us try the general we have here."

"He is a great nobleman."

"Do you believe he will answer?"

"Provided he is strong."

"That is to say, ferocious," said Boisberthelot.

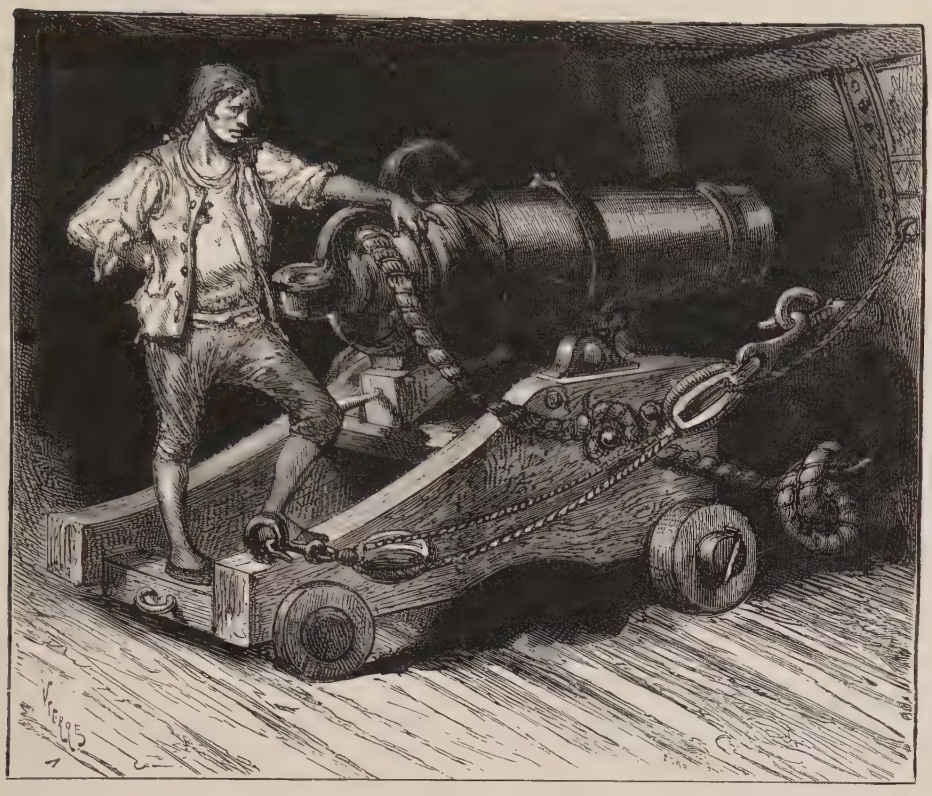
The count and the chevalier looked fixedly at one another.

"Monsieur du Boisberthelot, you have said the word—ferocious. Yes; that is what we need. This is a war without pity. The hour is to the bloodthirsty. The regicides have cut off Louis XVI.'s head—we will tear off the four limbs of the regicides. Yes, the general necessary is General Inexorable. In Anjou and Upper Poitou the chiefs do the magnanimous; they dabble in generosity—nothing moves on. In the Marais and the country of Retz, the chiefs are ferocious—every thing goes forward. It is because Charette is savage that he holds his own against Parrein—it is hyena against hyena."

Boisberthelot had no time to reply; La Vieuville's words were suddenly cut short by a desperate cry, and at the same instant they heard a noise as unaccountable as it was awful. The cry and this noise came from the interior of the vessel.

The captain and lieutenant made a rush for the gun-deck, but could not get down. All the gunners were hurrying frantically up.

A frightful thing had just happened!



CHAPTER IV

TORMENTUM BELLI

ONE of the carronades of the battery, a twenty-four-pounder, had got loose.

This is perhaps the most formidable of ocean accidents. Nothing more terrible can happen to a vessel in open sea and under full sail.

A gun that breaks its moorings becomes suddenly some indescribable supernatural beast. It is a machine which transforms itself into a monster. This mass turns upon its wheels, has the rapid movements of a billiard-ball; rolls with the rolling, pitches with the pitching; goes, comes, pauses, seems to meditate; resumes its course, rushes along the ship from end to end like an arrow, circles about, springs aside, evades, rears, breaks, kills, exterminates. It is a battering-ram which assaults a wall at its own caprice. Moreover, the battering-ram is metal, the wall wood. It is the entrance of matter into liberty. One might say

that this eternal slave avenges itself. It seems as if the power of evil hidden in what we call inanimate objects finds a vent and bursts suddenly out. It has an air of having lost patience, of seeking some fierce, obscure retribution; nothing more inexorable than this rage of the inanimate. The mad mass has the bounds of a panther, the weight of the elephant, the agility of the mouse, the obstinacy of the axe, the unexpectedness of the surge, the rapidity of lightning, the deafness of the tomb. It weighs ten thousand pounds, and it rebounds like a child's ball. Its flight is a wild whirl abruptly cut at right angles. What is to be done? How to end this? A tempest ceases, a cyclone passes, a wind falls, a broken mast is replaced, a leak is stopped, a fire dies out; but how to control this enormous brute of bronze? In what way can one attack it?

You can make a mastiff hear reason, astound a bull, fascinate a boa, frighten a tiger, soften a lion; but there is no resource with that monster, a cannon let loose. You can not kill it—it is dead; at the same time it lives. It lives with a sinister life bestowed on it by Infinity.

The planks beneath it give it play. It is moved by the ship, which is moved by the sea, which is moved by the wind. This destroyer is a plaything. The ship, the waves, the blasts, all aid it; hence its frightful vitality. How to assail this fury of complication? How to fetter this monstrous mechanism for wrecking a ship? How foresee its comings and goings, its returns, its stops, its shocks? Any one of these blows upon the sides may stave out the vessel. How divine its awful gyrations! One has to deal with a projectile which thinks, seems to possess ideas, and which changes its direction at each instant. How stop the course of something which must be avoided? The horrible cannon flings itself about, advances, recoils, strikes to the right, strikes to the left, flees, passes, disconcerts ambushes, breaks down obstacles, crushes men like flies. The great danger of the situation is in the mobility of its base. How combat an inclined plane which has caprices? The ship, so to speak, has lightning imprisoned in its womb which seeks to escape; it is like thunder rolling above an earthquake.

In an instant the whole crew were on foot. The fault was the chief gunner's; he had neglected to fix home the screw-nut of the mooring-chain, and had so badly shackled the four wheels of the carronade that the play given to the sole and frame had separated the platform, and ended by breaking the breeching. The cordage had broken, so that the gun was no longer secure on the carriage. The stationary breeching which prevents recoil was not in use at that period. As a heavy wave struck the port, the carronade, weakly attached,

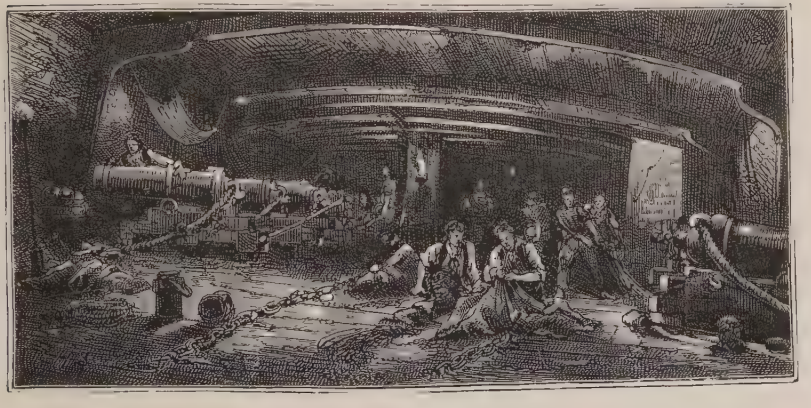
recoiled, burst its chain, and began to rush wildly about. Conceive, in order to have an idea of this strange sliding, a drop of water running down a pane of glass.

At the moment when the lashings gave way the gunners were in the battery, some in groups, others standing alone, occupied with such duties as sailors perform in expectation of the command to clear for action. The carronade, hurled forward by the pitching, dashed into this knot of men, and crushed four at the first blow; then, flung back and shot out anew by the rolling, it cut in two a fifth poor fellow, glanced off to the larboard side, and struck a piece of the battery with such force as to unship it. Then rose the cry of distress which had been heard. The men rushed toward the ladder—the gun-deck emptied in the twinkling of an eye. The enormous cannon was left alone. She was given up to herself. She was her own mistress, and mistress of the vessel. She could do what she willed with both. This whole crew, accustomed to laugh in battle, trembled now. To describe the universal terror would be impossible.

Captain Boisberthelot and Lieutenant Vieuville, although both intrepid men, stopped at the head of the stairs, and remained mute, pale, hesitating, looking down on the deck. Some one pushed them aside with his elbow and descended.

It was their passenger—the peasant—the man of whom they had been speaking a moment before.

When he reached the foot of the ladder, he stood still.



CHAPTER V

VIS ET VIR

THE cannon came and went along the deck. One might have fancied it the living chariot of the Apocalypse. The marine-lantern oscillating from the ceiling added a dizzying whirl of lights and shadows to this vision. The shape of the cannon was undistinguishable from the rapidity of its course; now it looked black in the light, now it cast weird reflections through the gloom.

It kept on its work of destruction. It had already shattered four other pieces, and dug two crevices in the side, fortunately above the water-line, though they would leak in case a squall should come on. It dashed itself frantically against the frame-work; the solid tie-beams resisted, their curved form giving them great strength, but they creaked ominously under the assaults of this terrible club, which seemed endowed with a sort of apalling ubiquity, striking on every side at once. The strokes of a bullet shaken in a bottle would not be madder or more rapid. The four wheels passed and repassed above the dead men, cut, carved, slashed them, till the five corpses were a score of stumps rolling about the deck; the heads seemed to cry out; streams of blood twisted in and out of the planks with every pitch of the vessel. The ceiling, damaged in several places, began to gape. The whole ship was filled with the awful tumult.

The captain promptly recovered his composure, and at his order the sailors threw down into the deck every thing which could deaden and check the mad rush of the gun—mattresses, hammocks, spare sails, coils of rope, extra equipments, and the bales of false assignats of which the corvette carried a whole cargo: an infamous deception which the English considered a fair trick in war.

But what could these rags avail? No one dared descend to arrange

them in any useful fashion, and in a few instants they were mere heaps of lint.

There was just sea enough to render an accident as complete as possible. A tempest would have been desirable; it might have thrown the gun upside down, and the four wheels once in the air, the monster could have been mastered. But the devastation increased. There were gashes and even fractures in the masts, which, imbedded in the woodwork of the keel, pierce the decks of ships like great round pillars. The mizzen-mast was cracked, and the main-mast itself was injured under the convulsive blows of the gun. The battery was being destroyed. Ten pieces out of the thirty were disabled; the breaches multiplied in the side, and the corvette began to take in water.

The old passenger, who had descended to the gun-deck, looked like a form of stone stationed at the foot of the stairs. He stood motionless, gazing sternly about upon the devastation. Indeed, it seemed impossible to take a single step forward.

Each bound of the liberated carronade menaced the destruction of the vessel. A few minutes more and shipwreck would be inevitable.

They must perish or put a summary end to the disaster—a decision must be made—but how?

What a combatant—this cannon!

They must check this mad monster. They must seize this flash of lightning. They must overthrow this thunderbolt.

Boisberthelot said to La Vieuville:

"Do you believe in God, chevalier?"

La Vieuville replied:

"Yes. No. Sometimes."

"In a tempest?"

"Yes; and in moments like this."

"Only God can aid us here," said Boisberthelot.

All were silent—the cannon kept up its horrible fracas.

The waves beat against the ship; their blows from without responded to the strokes of the cannon.

It was like two hammers alternating.

Suddenly, into the midst of this sort of inaccessible circus, where the escaped cannon leaped and bounded, there sprang a man with an iron bar in his hand. It was the author of this catastrophe, the gunner whose culpable negligence had caused the accident—the captain of the gun. Having been the means of bringing about the misfortune, he desired to repair it. He had caught up a handspike in one fist, a tiller-rope with a slipping noose in the other, and jumped down into the gun-deck.

Then a strange combat began; a titanic strife—the struggle of the gun against the gunner; a battle between matter and intelligence; a duel between the inanimate and the human.

The man was posted in an angle, the bar and rope in his two fists; backed against one of the riders, settled firmly on his legs as on two pillars of steel; livid, calm, tragic, rooted as it were in the planks, he waited.

He waited for the cannon to pass near him.

The gunner knew his piece, and it seemed to him that she must recognize her master. He had lived a long while with her. How many times he hard thrust his hand between her jaws! It was his tame monster. He began to address it as he might have done his dog.

"Come!" said he. Perhaps he loved it.

He seemed to wish that it would turn toward him.

But to come toward him would be to spring upon him. Then he would be lost. How to avoid its crush? There was the question. All stared in terrified silence.

Not a breast respired freely, except perchance that of the old man who alone stood in the deck with the two combatants, a stern second.

He might himself be crushed by the piece. He did not stir.

Beneath them, the blind sea directed the battle.

At the instant when, accepting this awful hand-to-hand contest, the gunner approached to challenge the cannon, some chance fluctuation of the waves kept it for a moment immovable, as if suddenly stupefied.

"Come on!" the man said to it. It seemed to listen.

Suddenly it darted upon him. The gunner avoided the shock.

The struggle began—struggle unheard of. The fragile matching itself against the invulnerable. The thing of flesh attacking the brazen brute. On the one side blind force, on the other a soul.

The whole passed in a half-light. It was like the indistinct vision of a miracle.

A soul—strange thing; but you would have said that the cannon had one also—a soul filled with rage and hatred. This blindness appeared to have eyes. The monster had the air of watching the man. There was—one might have fancied so at least—cunning in this mass. It also chose its moment. It became some gigantic insect of metal, having, or seeming to have, the will of a demon. Sometimes this colossal grasshopper would strike the low ceiling of the gun-deck, then fall back on its four wheels like a tiger upon its four claws, and dart anew on the man. He—supple, agile, adroit,—would glide away like a snake from the reach of these lightning-like movements. He avoided the encounters; but the blows which he escaped fell upon the vessel and continued the havoc.

An end of broken chain remained attached to the carronade. This chain had twisted itself, one could not tell how, about the screw of the breech-button. One extremity of the chain was fastened to the carriage. The other, hanging loose, whirled wildly about the gun and added to the danger of its blows.

The screw held it like a clenched hand, and the chain, multiplying the strokes of the battering-ram by its strokes of a thong, made a fearful whirlwind about the cannon—a whip of iron in a fist of brass. This chain complicated the battle.

Nevertheless, the man fought. Sometimes, even, it was the man who attacked the cannon. He crept along the side, bar and rope in hand, and the cannon had the air of understanding, and fled as if it perceived a snare. The man pursued it, formidable, fearless.

Such a duel could not last long. The gun seemed suddenly to say to itself, "Come, we must make an end!" and it paused. One felt the approach of the crisis. The cannon, as if in suspense, appeared to have, or had—because it seemed to all a sentient being—a furious premeditation. It sprang unexpectedly upon the gunner. He jumped aside, let it pass, and cried out with a laugh, "Try again!" The gun, as if in a fury, broke a carronade to larboard; then, seized anew by the invisible sling which held it, was flung to starboard toward the man, who escaped.

Three carronades gave way under the blows of the gun; then, as if blind and no longer conscious of what it was doing, it turned its back on the man, rolled from the stern to the bow, bruising the stem and making a breach in the plankings of the prow. The gunner had taken refuge at the foot of the stairs, a few steps from the old man, who was watching.

The gunner held his handspike in rest. The cannon seemed to perceive him, and, without taking the trouble to turn itself, backed upon him with the quickness of an axe-stroke. The gunner, if driven back against the side, was lost. The crew uttered a simultaneous cry.

But the old passenger, until now immovable, made a spring more rapid than all those wild whirls. He seized a bale of the false assignats, and at the risk of being crushed, succeeded in flinging it between the wheels of the carronade. This manœuvre, decisive and dangerous, could not have been executed with more adroitness and precision by a man trained to all the exercises set down in Durosel's "*Manual of Sea Gunnery*."

The bale had the effect of a plug. A pebble may stop a log, a tree-branch turn an avalanche. The carronade stumbled. The gunner, in his turn, seizing this terrible chance, plunged his iron bar between the spokes of one of the hind wheels. The cannon was stopped.

It staggered. The man, using the bar as a lever, rocked it to and fro. The heavy mass turned over with a clang like a falling bell, and the gunner, dripping with sweat, rushed forward headlong and passed the slipping noose of the tiller-rope about the bronze neck of the overthrown monster.

It was ended. The man had conquered. The ant had subdued the mastodon; the pigmy had taken the thunderbolt prisoner.

The marines and the sailors clapped their hands.

The whole crew hurried down with cables and chains, and in an instant the cannon was securely lashed.

The gunner saluted the passenger.

"Sir," he said to him, "you have saved my life."

The old man had resumed his impassible attitude, and did not reply.

CHAPTER VI

THE TWO SCALES OF THE BALANCE

THE man had conquered, but one might say that the cannon had conquered also. Immediate shipwreck had been avoided, but the corvette was by no means saved. The dilapidation of the vessel seemed irremediable. The sides had five breaches, one of which, very large, was in the bow. Out of the thirty carronades, twenty lay useless in ther frames. The carronade, which had been captured and rechained, was itself disabled; the screw of the breech-button was forced, and the leveling of the piece impossible in consequence. The battery was reduced to nine pieces. The hold had sprung a leak. It was necessary at once to repair the damages and set the pumps to work.

The gun-deck, now that one had time to look about it, offered a terrible spectacle. The interior of a mad elephant's cage could not have been more completely dismantled.

However great the necessity that the corvette should escape observation, a still more imperious necessity presented itself—immediate safety. It had been necessary to light up the deck by lanterns placed here and there along the sides.

But during the whole time this tragic diversion had lasted, the crew were so absorbed by the one question of life or death that they noticed little what was passing outside the scene of the duel. The fog had thickened; the weather had changed; the wind had driven the vessel at will; it had got out of its route, in plain sight of Jersey and Guernsey, farther to the south than it ought to have gone, and was surrounded by a troubled sea. The great waves kissed the gaping wounds of the corvette—kisses full of peril. The sea rocked her menacingly. The breeze became a gale. A squall, a tempest perhaps, threatened. It was impossible to see before one four oars' length.

While the crew were repairing summarily and in haste the ravages of the gun-deck, stopping the leaks and putting back into position the guns which had escaped the disaster, the old passenger had gone on deck.

He stood with his back against the main-mast.

He had paid no attention to a proceeding which had taken place on the vessel. The Chevalier La Vieuville had drawn up the marines in line on either side of the main-mast, and at the whistle of the boatswain the sailors busy in the rigging stood upright on the yards.

Count du Boisberthelot advanced toward the passenger.

Behind the captain marched a man haggard, breathless, his dress in disorder, yet wearing a satisfied look under it all. It was the gunner who had just now so opportunely shown himself a tamer of monsters, and who had got the better of the cannon.

The count made a military salute to the unknown in peasant garb, and said to him:

"General, here is the man."

The gunner held himself erect, his eyes downcast, standing in a soldierly attitude.

Count du Boisberthelot continued:

"General, taking into consideration what this man has done, do you not think there is something for his commanders to do?"

"I think there is," said the old man.

"Be good enough to give the orders," returned Boisberthelot.

"It is for you to give them. You are the captain."

"But you are the general," answered Boisberthelot.

The old man looked at the gunner.

"Approach," said he.

The gunner moved forward a step. The old man turned toward Count du Boisberthelot, detached the cross of Saint Louis from the captain's uniform and fastened it on the jacket of the gunner.

"Hurrah!" cried the sailors.

The marines presented arms. The old passenger, pointing with his finger toward the bewildered gunner, added:

"Now let that man be shot."

Stupor succeeded the applause.

Then, in the midst of a silence like that of the tomb, the old man raised his voice. He said:

"A negligence has endangered this ship. At this moment she is perhaps lost. To be at sea is to face the enemy. A vessel at open sea is an army which gives battle. The tempest conceals, but does not absent itself. The whole sea is an ambuscade. Death is the penalty of

any fault committed in the face of the enemy. No fault is reparable. Courage ought to be rewarded and negligence punished."

These words fell one after the other slowly, solemnly, with a sort of inexorable measure, like the blows of an axe upon an oak.

And the old man, turning to the soldiers, added:

"Do your duty."

The man upon whose breast shone the cross of Saint Louis bowed his head.

At a sign from Count du Boisberthelot, two sailors descended between decks, then returned, bringing the hammock winding-sheet. The ship's chaplain, who since the time of sailing had been at prayer in the officers' quarters, accompanied the two sailors; a sergeant detached from the line twelve marines, whom he arranged in two ranks, six by six; the gunner, without uttering a word, placed himself between the two files. The chaplain, crucifix in hand, advanced and stood near him.

"March!" said the sergeant.

The platoon moved with slow steps toward the bow. The two sailors who carried the shroud followed.

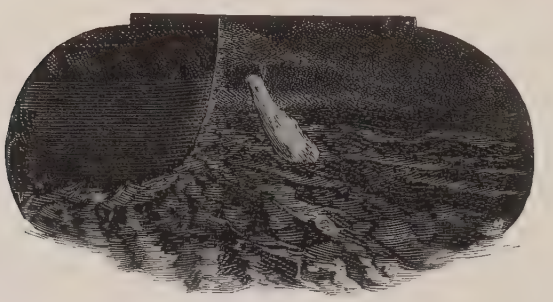
A gloomy silence fell upon the corvette. A hurricane moaned in the distance.

A few instants later there was a flash; a report followed, echoing among the shadows; then all was silent; then came the thud of a body falling into the sea.

The old passenger still leaned back against the main-mast with folded arms, thinking silently.

Boisberthelot pointed toward him with the forefinger of his left hand, and said in a low voice to La Vieuville:

"The Vendée has found a head!"



CHAPTER VII

HE WHO SETS SAIL PUTS INTO A LOTTERY

BUT what was to become of the corvette?

The clouds, which the whole night through had touched the waves, now lowered so thickly that the horizon was no longer visible; the sea seemed to be covered with a pall. Nothing to be seen but fog—a situation always perilous, even for a vessel in good condition.

Added to the mist came the surging swell.

The time had been used to good purpose: the corvette had been lightened by throwing overboard every thing which could be cleared from the havoc made by the carronade—the dismantled guns, the broken carriages, frames twisted or unnailed, the fragments of splintered wood and iron; the port-holes had been opened, and the corpses and parts of bodies, enveloped in tarpaulin, were slid down planks into the waves.

The sea was no longer manageable. Not that the tempest was imminent; it seemed, on the contrary, that the hurricane rustling behind the horizon decreased, and the squall was moving northward; but the waves were very high still, which indicated disturbance in the depths; the corvette could offer slight resistance to shocks in her crippled condition, so that the great waves might prove fatal to her.

Gacquoil stood thoughtfully at the helm.

To face ill-fortune with a bold front is the habit of those accustomed to rule at sea.

La Vieuville, who was the sort of man that becomes gay in the midst of disaster, accosted Gacquoil.

"Well, pilot," said he, "the squall has missed fire. Its attempt at sneezing comes to nothing. We shall get out of it. We shall have wind, and that is all."

Gacquoil replied, seriously, "Where there is wind there are waves."

Neither laughing nor sad, such is the sailor. The response had a disquieting significance. For a leaky ship to encounter a high sea is to fill rapidly. Gacquoil emphasized his prognostic by a frown. Perhaps La Vieuville had spoken almost jovial and gay words a little too soon after the catastrophe of the gun and its gunner. There are things which bring bad luck at sea. The ocean is secretive; one never knows what it means to do; it is necessary to be always on guard against it.

La Vieuville felt the necessity of getting back to gravity.

"Where are we, pilot?" he asked.

The pilot replied:

"We are in the hands of God."

A pilot is a master; he must always be allowed to do what he will, and often he must be allowed to say what he pleases. Generally this species of man speaks little.

La Vieuville moved away. He had asked a question of the pilot; it was the horizon which replied. The sea suddenly cleared.

The fogs which trailed across the waves were quickly rent; the dark confusion of the billows spread out to the horizon's verge in a shadowy half-light, and this was what became visible:

The sky seemed covered with a lid of clouds, but they no longer touched the water; in the east appeared a whiteness, which was the dawn; in the west trembled a corresponding pallor, which was the setting moon. These two ghostly presences drew opposite each other narrow bands of pale lights along the horizon, between the sombre sea and the gloomy sky.

Across each of these lines of light were sketched black profiles upright and immovable.

To the west, against the moonlit sky, stood out sharply three lofty rocks, erect as Celtic cromlechs.

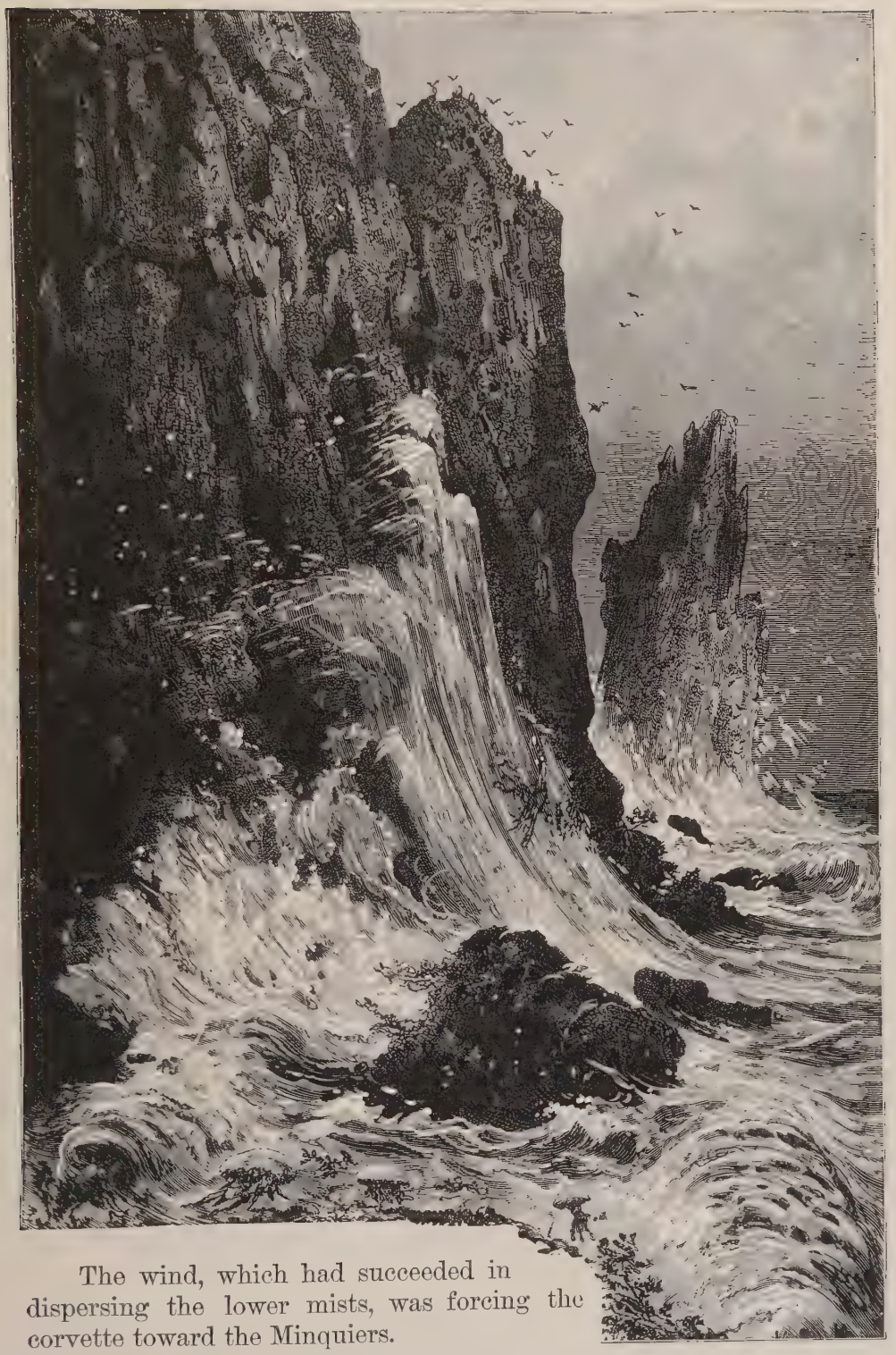
To the east, against the pale horizon of morning, rose eight sail ranged in order at regular intervals in a formidable array.

The three rocks were a reef; the eight ships, a squadron.

Behind the vessel was the Minquiers, a rock of an evil renown; before her, the French cruisers. To the west, the abyss; to the east, carnage: she was between a shipwreck and a combat.

For meeting the reef, the corvette had a broken hull, rigging disjointed, masts tottering in their foundations; for facing battle, she had a battery where one-and-twenty cannon out of thirty were dismounted, and whose best gunners were dead.

The dawn was yet faint; there still remained a little night to them. This might even last for some time, since it was principally made by thick, high clouds presenting the solid appearance of a vault.



The wind, which had succeeded in dispersing the lower mists, was forcing the corvette toward the Minquiers.

In her excessive feebleness and dilapidation, she scarcely obeyed the helm; she rolled rather than sailed, and, smitten by the waves, she yielded passively to their impulse.

The Minquiers, a dangerous reef, was still more rugged at that time than it is now. Several towers of this citadel of the abyss have been razed by the incessant chopping of the sea. The configuration of reefs changes; it is not idly that waves are called the swords of the ocean; each tide is the stroke of a saw. At that period, to strike on the Minquiers was to perish.

As for the cruisers, they were the squadron of Cancale, afterward so celebrated under the command of that Captain Duchesne whom Léquinio called "Father Duchesne."

The situation was critical. During the struggle of the unchained carronade, the corvette had, unobserved, got out of her course, and sailed rather toward Granville than Saint Malo. Even if she had been in a condition to have been handled and to carry sail, the Minquiers would have barred her return toward Jersey, and the cruisers would have prevented her reaching France.

For the rest, tempest there was none. But, as the pilot had said, there was a swell. The sea, rolling under a rough wind and above a rocky bottom, was savage.

The sea never says at once what it wishes. The gulf hides every thing, even trickery. One might almost say that the sea has a plan: it advances and recoils; it proposes and contradicts itself; it sketches a storm and renounces its design; it promises the abyss, and does not hold to it; it threatens the north and strikes the south.

All night the corvette *Claymore* had had the fog and the fear of the storm; the sea had belied itself, but in a savage fashion. it had sketched in the tempest, but developed the reef. It was shipwreck just the same, under another form.

So that to destruction upon the rocks was added extermination by combat—one enemy complementing the other.

La Vieuville cried amid his brave merriment:

"Shipwreck here—battle there! We have thrown double fives!"

CHAPTER VIII

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THE corvette was little more than a wreck.

In the wan, dim light, midst the blackness of the clouds, in the confused, changing line of the horizon, in the mysterious sullenness of the waves, there was a sepulchral solemnity. Except for the hissing breath of the hostile wind, all was silent. The catastrophe rose with majesty from the gulf. It resembled rather an apparition than an attack. Nothing stirred among the rocks; nothing moved on the vessels. It was an indescribable, colossal silence. Had they to deal with something real? One might have believed it a dream sweeping across the sea. There are legends of such visions; the corvette was in a manner between the demon reef and the phantom fleet.

Count du Boisberthelot gave orders in a half-voice to La Vieuville, who descended to the gun-deck; then the captain seized his telescope and stationed himself at the stern by the side of the pilot.

Gacquoil's whole effort was to keep the corvette to the wind; for if struck on the side by the wind and the sea, she would inevitably capsize.

"Pilot," said the captain, "where are we?"

"Off the Minquiers."

"On which side?"

"The bad one."

"What bottom?"

"Small rocks."

"Can we turn broadside on?"

"We can always die," said the pilot.

The captain leveled his glass toward the west and examined the Minquiers; then he turned to the east and studied the sail in sight.

The pilot continued, as if talking to himself:

"It is the Minquiers. It is where the laughing sea-mew and the great black-hooded gull rest, when they make for Holland."

In the meantime the captain counted the sail.

There were, indeed, eight vessels, drawn up in line, and lifting their warlike profiles above the water. In the centre was seen the lofty sweep of a three-decker.

The captain questioned the pilot.

"Do you know those ships?"

"Indeed, yes!" replied Gacquoil.

"What are they?"

"It is the squadron."

"Of France?"

"Of the devil."

There was a silence. The captain resumed:

"The whole body of cruisers are there."

"Not all."

In fact, on the 2d of April, Valazé had announced to the Convention that ten frigates and six ships of the line were cruising in the Channel. The recollection of this came into the captain's mind.

"Right," said he; "the squadron consists of sixteen vessels. There are only eight here."

"The rest," said Gacquoil, "are lagging below, the whole length of the coast, and on the look-out."

The captain, still with his glass to his eye, murmured:

"A three-decker, two first-class frigates, and five second-class."

"But I, too," growled Gacquoil, "have marked them out."

"Good vessels," said the captain; "I have done something myself toward commanding them."

"As for me," said Gacquoil, "I have seen them close by. I do not mistake one for the other. I have their description in my head."

The captain handed his telescope to the pilot.

"Pilot, can you make out the three-decker clearly?"

"Yes, captain: it is the *Côte d'Or*."

"Which they have rebaptized," said the captain. "She was formerly the *États de Bourgogne*. A new vessel. A hundred and twenty-eight guns."

He took a pencil and note-book from his pocket, and made the figure 128 on one of the leaves.

He continued:

"Pilot, what is the first sail to larboard?"

"It is the *Expérimentée*. The ——"

"First-class frigate. Fifty-two guns. She was fitted out at Brest two months since."

The captain marked the figure 52 on his note-book.

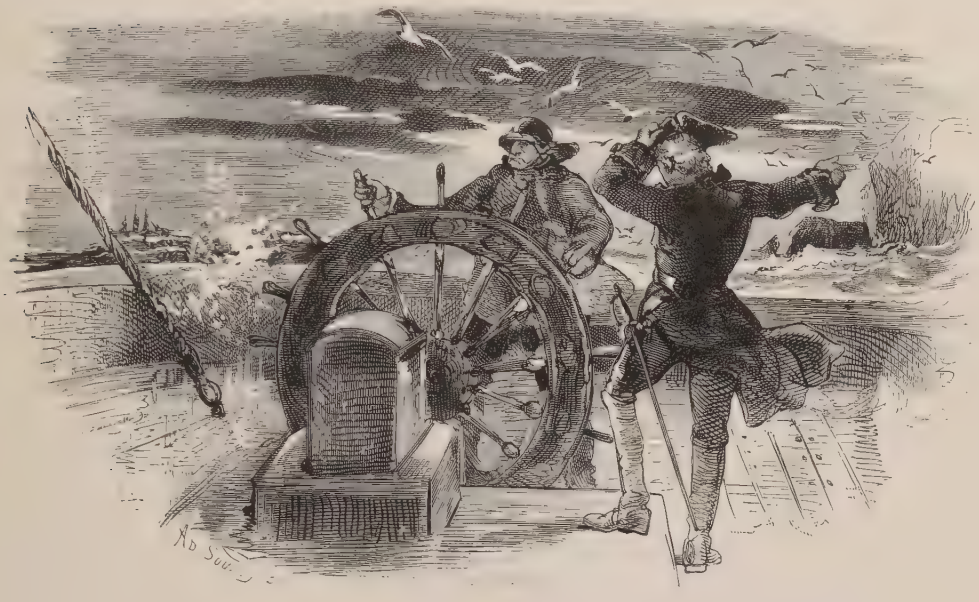
"Pilot," he asked, "what is the second sail to larboard?"

"The *Dryade*."

"First-class frigate. Forty eighteen-pounders. She has been in India. She has a good naval reputation."

And beneath the 52 he put the figure 40; then lifting his head:

"Now to starboard."



"Commander, those are all second-class frigates. There are five of them."

"Which is the first, starting from the three-decker?"

"The *Résolute*."

"Thirty-two pieces of eighteen. And the second?"

"The *Richemont*."

"Same. The next?"

"The *Athéiste*."*

"Odd name to take to sea. What next?"

"The *Calypso*."

"And then?"

"*La Preneuse*."

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* *Marine Archives:* State of the Fleet in 1793.

"Five frigates, each of thirty-two guns."

The captain wrote 160 below the first figures.

"Pilot," said he, "you recognize them perfectly."

"And you," replied Gacquoil—"you know them well, captain. To recognize is something, to know is better."

The captain had his eyes fixed on his note-book, and added between his teeth:

"One hundred and twenty-eight; fifty-two; forty; a hundred and sixty."

At this moment La Vieuville came on deck again.

"Chevalier," the captain cried out to him, "we are in sight of three hundred and eighty cannon."

"So be it," said La Vieuville.

"You come from the inspection, La Vieuville: how many guns, exactly, have we fit for firing?"

"Nine."

"So be it," said Boisberthelot, in his turn.

He took the telescope from the pilot's hands and studied the horizon.

The eight vessels, silent and black, seemed motionless, but they grew larger.

They were approaching imperceptibly.

La Vieuville made a military salute.

"Commander," said he, "this is my report. I distrusted this corvette *Claymore*. It is always annoying to embark suddenly on a vessel that does not know you or that does not love you. English ship—traitor to Frenchmen. That slut of a carronade proved it. I have made the round. Anchors good. They are not made of half-finished iron, but forged bars soldered under the tilt-hammer. The flukes are solid. Cables excellent: easy to pay out; regulation length, a hundred and twenty fathoms. Munitions in plenty. Six gunners dead. A hundred and seventy-one rounds apiece."

"Because there are but nine pieces left," murmured the captain.

Boisberthelot leveled his telescope with the horizon. The squadron was still slowly approaching.

The carronades possess one advantage—three men are enough to work them; but they have one inconvenience—they do not carry so far or aim so true as guns. It would be necessary to let the squadron get within range of the carronades.

The captain gave his orders in a low voice. There was silence throughout the vessel. No signal to clear for battle had been given, but it was done. The corvette was as much disabled for combat with men as against the waves. Every thing that was possible was done with this

ruin of a war-vessel. By the gangway near the tiller-ropes were heaped all the hawsers and spare cables for strengthening the masts in case of need. The cockpit was put in order for the wounded. According to the naval use of that time, the deck was barricaded, which is a guaranty against balls, but not against bullets. The ball-gauges were brought, although it was a little late, to verify the calibres; but so many incidents had not been foreseen. Each sailor received a cartridge-box, and stuck into his belt a pair of pistols and a dirk. The hammocks were stowed away, the artillery pointed, the musketry prepared, the axes and grapplings laid out, the cartridge and bullet stores made ready, and the powder-room opened. Every man was at his post. All was done without a word being spoken, like arrangements carried on in the chamber of a dying person. All was haste and gloom.

Then the corvette showed her broadside. She had six anchors, like a frigate. The whole six were cast: the cockbill anchor forward, the kedger aft, the flood-anchor toward the open, the ebb-anchor on the side to the rocks, the bower-anchor to starboard, and the sheet-anchor to larboard.

The nine carronades still in condition were put into form; the whole nine on one side—that toward the enemy.

The squadron had on its part not less silently completed its manœuvres. The eight vessels now formed a semicircle, of which the Minquiers made the chord. The *Claymore*, inclosed in this semicircle, and into the bargain tied down by her anchors, was backed by the reef—that is to say, by shipwreck.

It was like a pack of hounds about a wild boar, not yet giving tongue, but showing their teeth.

It seemed as if on the one side and the other they awaited some signal.

The gunners of the *Claymore* stood to their pieces.

Boisberthelot said to La Vieuville:

"I should like to open fire."

"A coquette's whim," replied La Vieuville.

CHAPTER IX

SOME ONE ESCAPES

THE passenger had not quitted the deck; he watched all the proceedings with the same impassible mien.

Boisberthelot approached.

"Sir, he said to him, "the preparations are complete. We are now lashed fast to our tomb; we shall not let go our hold. We are the prisoners of either the squadron or the reef. To yield to the enemy, or founder among the rocks; we have no other choice. One resource remains to us—to die. It is better to fight than be wrecked. I would rather be shot than drowned; in the matter of death, I prefer fire to water. But dying is the business of the rest of us; it is not yours. You are the man chosen by the princes; you are appointed to a great mission—the direction of the war in Vendée. Your loss is perhaps the monarchy lost—therefore you must live. Our honor bids us remain here; yours bids you go. General, you must quit the ship. I am going to give you a man and a boat. To reach the coast by a détour is not impossible. It is not yet day; the waves are high, the sea is dark; you will escape. There are cases when to fly is to conquer."

The old man bowed his stately head in sign of acquiescence.

Count du Boisberthelot raised his voice:

"Soldiers and sailors!" he cried.

Every movement ceased; from each point of the vessel all faces turned toward the captain.

He continued:

"This man who is among us represents the king. He has been confided to us; we must save him. He is necessary to the throne of France; in default of a prince, he will be—at least this is what we try for—the leader in the Vendée. He is a great general. He was to have

landed in France with us; he must land without us. To save the head is to save all."

"Yes! yes! yes!" cried the voices of the whole crew.

The captain continued:

"He is about to risk, he also, serious danger. It will not be easy to reach the coast. In order to face the angry sea, the boat should be large, and should be small in order to escape the cruisers. What must be done is to make land at some safe point, and better toward Fougères than in the direction of Coutances. It needs an athletic sailor, a good oarsman and swimmer, who belongs to this coast, and knows the Channel. There is night enough, so that the boat can leave the corvette without being perceived. And, besides, we are going to have smoke, which will serve to hide her. The boat's size will help her through the shallows. Where the panther is snared, the weasel escapes. There is no outlet for us; there is for her. The boat will row rapidly off; the enemy's ships will not see her; and moreover, during that time we are going to amuse them ourselves. Is it decided?"

"Yes! yes! yes!" cried the crew.

"There is not an instant to lose," pursued the captain. "Is there any man willing?"

A sailor stepped out of the ranks in the darkness, and said, "I."

CHAPTER X

DOES HE ESCAPE?

A FEW minutes later, one of those little boats called a "gig," which are especially appropriated to the captain's service, pushed off from the vessel. There were two men in this boat—the old man in the stern, and the sailor who had volunteered in the bow. The night still lingered. The sailor, in obedience to the captain's orders, rowed vigorously in the direction of the Minquiers. For that matter, no other issue was possible. Some provisions had been put into the boat: a bag of biscuit, a smoked ox-tongue, and a cask of water.

At the instant the gig was let down, La Vieuville, a scoffer even in the presence of destruction, leaned over the corvette's stern-post, and sneered this farewell to the boat:

"She is a good one if one want to escape, and excellent if one wish to drown."

"Sir," said the pilot, "let us laugh no longer."

The start was quickly made, and there was soon a considerable distance between the boat and the corvette. The wind and the waves were in the oarsman's favor; the little bark fled swiftly, undulating through the twilight, and hidden by the height of the waves.

The sea seemed to wear a look of sombre, indescribable expectation.

Suddenly, amid the vast and tumultuous silence of the ocean, rose a voice, which, increased by the speaking-trumpet as if by the brazen mask of antique tragedy, sounded almost superhuman.

It was the voice of Captain Boisberthelot giving his commands: "Royal marines," cried he, "nail the white flag to the main-mast. We are about to see our last sunrise."

And the corvette fired its first shot.

"Long live the King!" shouted the crew.

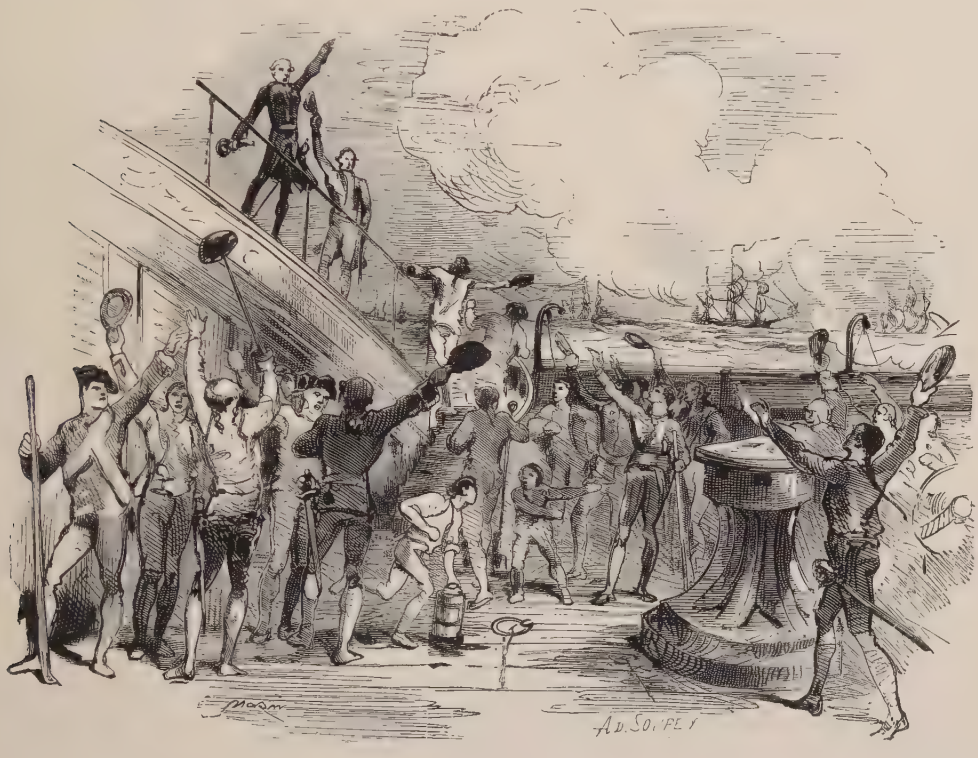
Then from the horizon's verge echoed an answering shout, immense, distant, confused, yet distinct nevertheless:

"Long live the Republic!"

And a din like the peal of three hundred thunderbolts burst over the depths of the sea.

The battle began.

The sea was covered with smoke and fire. Streams of foam, made by the falling bullets, whitened the waves on every side.



The *Claymore* began to spit flame on the eight vessels. At the same time the whole squadron, ranged in a half-moon about the corvette, opened fire from all its batteries. The horizon was in a blaze. A volcano seemed to have burst suddenly out of the sea. The wind twisted to and fro the vast crimson banner of battle, amid which the ships appeared and disappeared like phantoms.

In front the black skeleton of the corvette showed against the red background.

The white banner, with its *fleur-de-lis*, could be seen floating from the main.

The two men seated in the little boat kept silence. The triangular shallows of the Minquiers, a sort of submarine Trinacrium, is larger than the entire island of Jersey; the sea covers it; it has for culminating point a platform, which even the highest tides do not reach, from whence six mighty rocks detach themselves toward the northeast, ranged in a straight line, and producing the effect of a great wall, which has crumbled here and there. The strait between the plateau and the six reefs is only practicable to boats drawing very little water. Beyond this strait is the open sea.

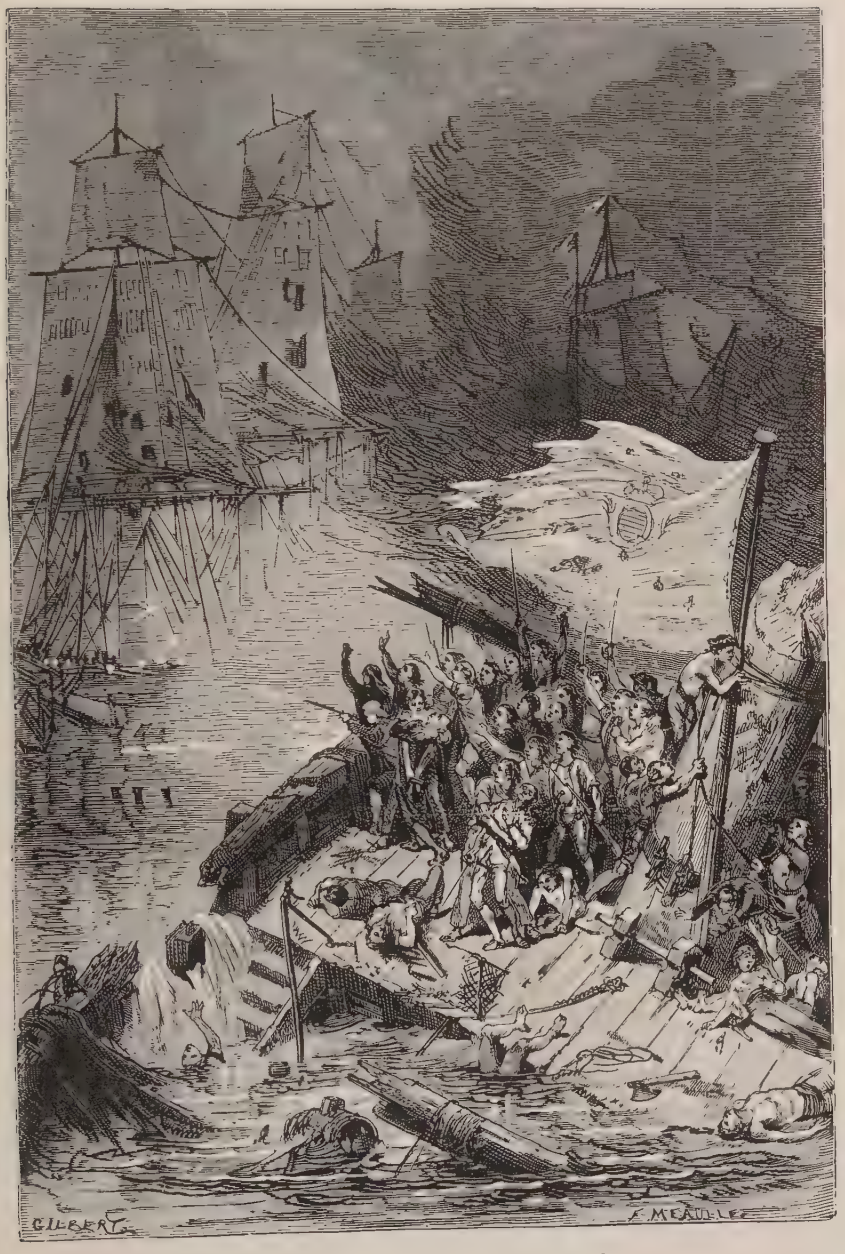
The sailor who had undertaken the command of the boat made for this strait. By that means he put the Minquiers between the battle and

the little bark. He manœuvred the narrow channel skillfully, avoiding the reefs to larboard and starboard. The rocks now masked the conflict. The lurid light of the horizon, and the awful uproar of the cannonading, began to lessen as the distance increased; but the continuance of the reports proved that the corvette held firm, and meant to exhaust to the very last her one hundred and seventy-one broadsides. Presently the boat reached safe water, beyond the reef, beyond the battle, out of reach of the bullets.

Little by little the face of the sea became less dark; the rays, against which the darkness struggled, widened; the foam burst into jets of light, and the tops of the waves gave back white reflections.

Day appeared.

The boat was out of danger so far as the enemy was concerned, but the most difficult part of the task remained. She was saved from grape-



THE CORVETTE FOUNDERS.

shot, but not from shipwreck. She was a mere egg-shell, in a high sea, without deck, without sail, without mast, without compass, having no resource but her oars, in the presence of the ocean and the hurricane; an atom at the mercy of giants.

Then, amid this immensity, this solitude, lifting his face, whitened by the morning, the man in the bow of the boat looked fixedly at the one in the stern, and said:

"I am the brother of him you ordered to be shot."

D. Maillart
HAL MALO
C. FROMENT. SC.

BOOK III

HALMALO

CHAPTER I

SPEECH IS THE "WORD"

THE old man slowly raised his head.

He who had spoken was a man of about thirty. His forehead was brown with sea-tan; his eyes were peculiar: they had the keen glance of a sailor in the open pupils of a peasant. He held the oars vigorously in his two hands. His air was mild.

In his belt were a dirk, two pistols, and a rosary.

"Who are you?" asked the old man.

"I have just told you."

"What do you want with me?"

The sailor shipped the oars, folded his arms, and replied:

"To kill you."

"As you please," said the old man.

The other raised his voice.

"Get ready!"

"For what?"

"To die."

"Why?" asked the old man.

There was a silence. The sailor seemed for an instant confused by the question. He repeated:

"I say that I mean to kill you."

"And I ask you what for?"

The sailor's eyes flashed lightning.

"Because you killed my brother."

The old man replied with perfect calmness:

"I began by saving his life."

"That is true. You saved him first, then you killed him."

"It was not I who killed him."

"Who, then?"

"His own fault."

The sailor stared open-mouthed at the old man; then his eyebrows met again in their murderous frown.

"What is your name?" asked the old man.

"Halmalo; but you do not need to know my name in order to be killed by me."

At this moment the sun rose. A ray struck full upon the sailor's face, and vividly lighted up that savage countenance. The old man studied it attentively.

The cannonading, though it still continued, was broken and irregular. A vast cloud of smoke weighed down the horizon. The boat, no longer directed by the oarsman, drifted to leeward.

The sailor seized in his right hand one of the pistols at his belt, and the rosary in his left.

The old man raised himself to his full height.

"You believe in God?" said he.

"Our Father which art in Heaven," replied the sailor. And he made the sign of the cross.

"Have you a mother?"

"Yes."

He made a second sign of the cross. Then he resumed:

"It is all said. I give you a minute, my lord." And he cocked the pistol.

"Why do you call me 'my lord?'"

"Because you are a lord. That is plain enough to be seen."

"Have you a lord—you?"

"Yes, and a grand one. Does one live without a lord?"

"Where is he?"

"I don't know. He has left this country. He is called the Marquis de Lantenac, Viscount de Fontenay, Prince in Brittany; he is the

lord of the Seven Forests. I never saw him, but that does not prevent his being my master."

"And if you were to see him, would you obey him?"

"Indeed, yes. Why, I should be a heathen if I did not obey him. I owe obedience to God, then to the king, who is like God, and then to the lord, who is like the king. But we have nothing to do with all that; you killed my brother—I must kill you."

The old man replied:

"Agreed; I killed your brother. I did well."

The sailor clenched the pistol more tightly.

"Come," said he.

"So be it," said the old man.

Still perfectly composed, he added:

"Where is the priest?"

The sailor stared at him.

"The priest?"

"Yes; the priest. I gave your brother a priest; you owe me one."

"I have none," said the sailor.

And he continued:

"Are priests to be found out at sea?"

The convulsive thunderings of battle sounded more and more distant.

"Those who are dying yonder have theirs," said the old man.

"That is true," murmured the sailor; "they have the chaplain."

The old man continued: "You will lose me my soul—that is a serious matter."

The sailor bent his head in thought.

"And in losing me my soul," pursued the old man, "you lose your own. Listen. I have pity on you. Do what you choose. As for me, I did my duty a little while ago, first in saving your brother's life, and afterward in taking it from him; and I am doing my duty now in trying to save your soul. Reflect. It is your affair. Do you hear the cannon-shots at this instant? There are men perishing yonder, there are desperate creatures dying, there are husbands who will never again see their wives, fathers who will never again see their children, brothers who, like you, will never again see their brothers. And by whose fault? Your brother's—yours. You believe in God, do you not? Well, you know that God suffers in this moment; He suffers in the person of His Most Christian Son the King of France, who is a child as Jesus was, and who is a prisoner in the fortress of the Temple. God suffers in His Church of Brittany; He suffers in His insulted cathedrals, His desecrated Gospels; in His violated houses of prayer; in His murdered priests.

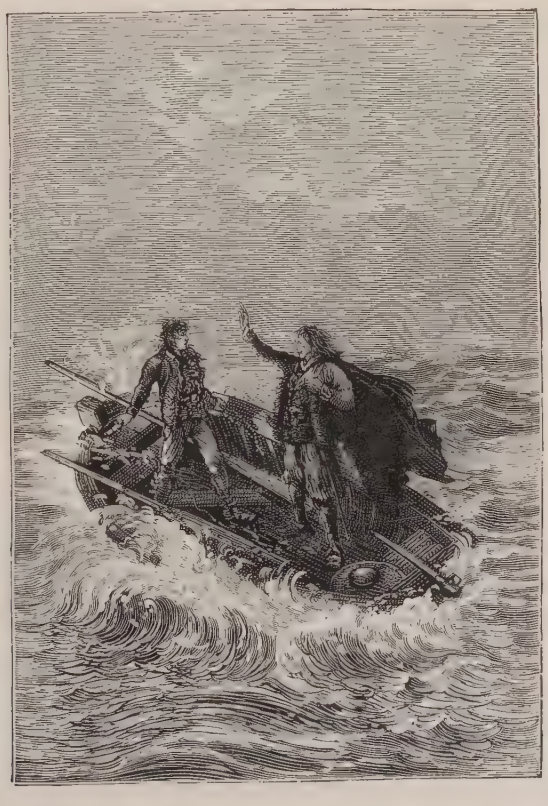
What did we intend to do, we, with that vessel which is perishing at this instant? We were going to succor God's children. If your brother had been a good servant, if he had faithfully done his duty like a wise and prudent man, the accident of the carronade would not have occurred, the corvette would not have been disabled, she would not have got out of her course, she would not have fallen in with this fleet of perdition, and at this hour we should be landing in France, all, like valiant soldiers and seamen as we were, sabre in hand, the white flag unfurled—numerous, glad, joyful; and we should have gone to help the brave Vendean peasants to save France, to save the king—we should have been doing God's work. This was what we meant to do; this was what we should have done. It is what I—the only one who remains—set out to do. But you oppose yourself thereto. In this contest of the impious against the priests, in this strife of the regicides against the king, in this struggle of Satan against God, you are on the devil's side. Your brother was the demon's first auxiliary; you are the second. He commenced; you finish. You are with the regicides against the throne; you are with the impious against the Church. You take away from God His last resource. Because I shall not be there—I, who represent the king—the hamlets will continue to burn, families to weep, priests to bleed, Brittany to suffer, the king to remain in prison, and Jesus Christ to be in distress. And who will have caused this? You. Go on; it is your affair. I depended on you to help bring about just the contrary of all this. I deceived myself. Ah, yes—it is true—you are right—I killed your brother. Your brother was courageous; I recompensed that. He was culpable; I punished that. He had failed in his duty; I did not fail in mine. What I did, I would do again. And I swear by the great Saint Anne of Auray, who sees us, that, in a similar case, I would shoot my son just as I shot your brother. Now you are master. Yes, I pity you. You have lied to your captain. You, Christian, are without faith; you, Breton, are without honor; I was confided to your loyalty and accepted by your treason; you offer my death to those to whom you had promised my life. Do you know who it is you are destroying here? It is yourself. You take my life from the king, and you give your eternity to the devil. Go on; commit your crime; it is well. You sell cheaply your share in Paradise. Thanks to you, the devil will conquer; thanks to you, the churches will fall; thanks to you, the heathen will continue to melt the bells and make cannon of them; they will shoot men with that which used to warn souls! At this moment in which I speak to you, perhaps the bell that rang for your baptism is killing your mother. Go on; aid the devil. Do not hesitate. Yes, I condemned your brother; but know this—I am an instrument of God. Ah, you pretend to judge

the means God uses! Will you take it on yourself to judge Heaven's thunderbolt? Wretched man, you will be judged by it! Take care what you do. Do you even know whether I am in a state of grace? No. Go on all the same. Do what you like. You are free to cast me into hell, and to cast yourself there with me. Our two damnations are in your hand. It is you who will be responsible before God. We are alone; face to face in the abyss. Go on—finish—make an end. I am old and you are young; I am without arms and you are armed; kill me."

While the old man stood erect, uttering these words in a voice louder than the noise of the sea, the undulations of the waves showed him now in the shadow, now in the light. The sailor had grown lividly white; great drops of sweat fell from his forehead; he trembled like a leaf; he kissed his rosary again and again. When the old man finished speaking, he threw down his pistol and fell on his knees.

"Mercy, my lord! Pardon me!" he cried; "you speak like God. I have done wrong. My brother did wrong. I will try to repair his crime. Dispose of me. Command. I will obey."

"I give you pardon," said the old man.



CHAPTER II

THE PEASANT'S MEMORY IS AS GOOD AS THE CAPTAIN'S SCIENCE

THE provisions which had been put into the boat proved most acceptable. The two fugitives, obliged to make long détours, took thirty-six hours to reach the coast. They passed a night at sea; but the night was fine, though there was too much moon to be favorable to those seeking concealment.

They were obliged first to row away from France, and gain the open sea toward Jersey.

They heard the last broadside of the sinking corvette as one hears the final roar of the lion whom the hunters are killing in the wood. Then a silence fell upon the sea.

The *Claymore* died like the *Avenger*, but glory has ignored her. The man who fights against his own country is never a hero.

Halmalo was a marvelous seaman. He performed miracles of dexterity and intelligence; his improvisation of a route amid the reefs, the waves, and the enemy's watch, was a masterpiece. The wind had slackened and the sea grown calmer. Halmalo avoided the Caux des Minquiers, coasted the Chaussée-aux-Bœufs, and, in order that they might have a few hours' rest, took shelter in the little creek on the north side, practicable at low water; then, rowing southward again, found means to pass between Granville and the Chausey Islands without being discovered by the look-out either of Granville or Chausey. He entered the bay of Saint-Michael—a bold undertaking, on account of the neighborhood of Cancale, an anchorage for the cruising squadron.

About an hour before sunset on the evening of the second day, he left Saint Michael's Mount behind him, and proceeded to land on a deserted beach, because the shifting sands made it dangerous.

THE WATCHWORD.

Fortunately the tide was high.

Halmalo drove the boat as far up as he could, tried the sand, found it firm, ran the bark aground and sprang on shore. The old man strode over the side after him and examined the horizon.

"Monseigneur," said Halmalo, "we are here at the mouth of the Couesnon. There is Beauvoir to starboard, and Huisnes to larboard. The belfry in front of us is Ardevon."

The old man bent down to the boat and took a biscuit, which he put in his pocket, and said to Halmalo:

"Take the rest."

Halmalo put the remains of the meat and biscuit into the bag and slung it over his shoulder. This done, he said:

"Monseigneur, must I conduct or follow you?"

"Neither the one nor the other."

"Halmalo regarded the speaker in stupefied wonder.

The old man continued:

"Halmalo, we must separate. It will not answer to be two. There must be a thousand or one alone."

He paused, and drew from one of his pockets a green silk bow, rather like a cockade, with a gold *fleur-de-lis* embroidered in the centre. He resumed:

"Do you know how to read?"

"No."

"That is fortunate. A man who can read is troublesome. Have you a good memory?"

"Yes."

"That will do. Listen, Halmalo. You must take to the right and I to the left. I shall go in the direction of Fougères, you toward Bazouges. Keep your bag; it gives you the look of a peasant. Conceal your weapons. Cut yourself a stick in the thickets. Creep among the fields of rye, which are high. Slide behind the hedges. Climb the fences in order to go across the meadows. Leave passers-by at a distance. Avoid the roads and the bridges. Do not enter Pontorson. Ah! you will have to cross the Couesnon. How will you manage?"

"I shall swim."

"That's right. And there is a ford—do you know where it is?"

"Between Ancey and Vieux-Viel."

"That is right. You do really belong to the country."

"But night is coming on. Where will monseigneur sleep?"

"I can take care of myself. And you—where will you sleep?"

"There are hollow trees. I was a peasant before I was a sailor."

"Throw away your sailor's hat; it will betray you. You will easily find a woolen cap."

"Oh, a peasant's thatch is to be found anywhere. The first fisherman will sell me his."

"Very good. Now listen. You know the woods?"

"All of them."

"Of the whole district?"

"From Noirmoutier to Laval."

"Do you know their names too?"

"I know the woods; I know their names; I know about every thing."

"You will forget nothing?"

"Nothing."

"Good. At present, attention. How many leagues can you make in a day?"

"Ten, fifteen—twenty, if necessary."

"It will be. Do not lose a word of what I am about to say. You will go to the wood of St. Aubin."

"Near Lamballe?"

"Yes. On the edge of the ravine between Saint-Reuil and Plédiac there is a large chestnut-tree. You will stop there. You will see no one."

"Which will not hinder somebody's being there. I know."

"You will give the call. Do you know how to give the call?"

Halmalo puffed out his checks, turned toward the sea, and there sounded the "to-whit, to-hoo" of an owl.

One would have said it came from the night-locked recesses of a forest. It was sinister and owl-like.

"Good," said the old man. "You have it."

He held out the bow of green silk to Halmalo.

"This is my badge of command. Take it. It is important that no one should as yet know my name. But this knot will be sufficient. The *fleur-de-lis* was embroidered by Madame Royale in the Temple prison."

Halmalo bent one knee to the ground. He trembled as he took the flower-embroidered knot, and brought it near to his lips, then paused, as if frightened at this kiss.

"Can I?" he demanded.

"Yes; since you kiss the crucifix."

Halmalo kissed the *fleur-de-lis*.

"Rise," said the old man.

Halmalo rose and hid the knot in his breast.

The old man continued:

"Listen well to this. This is the order: *Up! Revolt! No quarter!* On the edge of this wood of Saint-Aubin you will give the call. You will repeat it thrice. The third time you will see a man spring out of the ground."

"Out of a hole under the trees. I know."

"This man will be Planchenault, who is also called the King's Heart. You will show him this knot. He will understand. Then, by

routes you must find out, you will go to the wood of Astillé; there you will find a cripple, who is surnamed Mousqueton, and who shows pity to none. You will tell him that I love him, and that he is to set the parishes in motion. From there you will go to the wood of Couesbon, which is a league from Ploërmel. You will give the owl-cry; a man will come out of a hole; it will be Thuault, seneschal of Ploërmel, who has belonged to what is called the Constituent Assembly, but on the good side. You will tell him to arm the castle of Couesbon, which belongs to the Marquis de Guer, a refugee. Ravines, little woods, ground uneven—a good place. Thuault is a clever, straightforward man. Thence you will go to Saint-Guen-les-Toits, and you will talk with Jean Chouan, who is, in my mind, the real chief. From thence you will go to the wood of Ville-Anglose, where you will see Guitter, whom they call Saint Martin; you will bid him have his eye on a certain Courmesnil, who is the son-in-law of old Goupil de Préfeln, and

who leads the Jacobinery of Argentan. Recollect all this. I write nothing, because nothing should be written. La Rouarie made out a list; it ruined all. Then you will go to the wood of Rougefeu, where is Miélette, who leaps the ravine on a long pole."

"It is called a leaping-pole."

"Do you know how to use it?"

"Am I not a Breton and a peasant? The *ferte* is our friend. She widens our arms and lengthens our legs."

"That is to say, she makes the enemy smaller and shortens the route. A good machine."

"Once on a time, with my *ferte*, I held my own against three salt-tax men who had sabres."

"When was that?"

"Ten years ago."

"Under the king?"

"Yes, of course."

"Then you fought in the time of the king?"

"Yes, to be sure."

"Against whom?"

"My faith, I do not know! I was a salt-smuggler."

"Very good."

"They called that fighting against the excise officers. Were they the same thing as the king?"

"Yes. No. But it is not necessary that you should understand."

"I beg monseigneur's pardon for having asked a question of monseigneur."

"Let us continue. Do you know La Tourgue?"

"Do I know La Tourgue? Why, I belong there."

"How?"

"Certainly, since I come from Parigné."

"In fact, La Tourgue is near Parigné."

"Know La Tourgue! The big round castle that belongs to my lord's family? There is a great iron door which separates the new part from the old that a cannon could not blow open. The famous book about Saint Bartholomew, which people go to look at from curiosity, is in the new building. There are frogs in the grass. When I was little, I used to go and tease them. And the underground passage!—I know that; perhaps there is nobody else left who does."

"What underground passage? I do not know what you mean."

"It was made for old times, in the days when La Tourgue was besieged. The people inside could escape by going through the underground passage which leads into the wood."

"There is a subterranean passage of that description in the castle of Jupellière, and the castle of Hunaudaye, and the tower of Champéon; but there is nothing of the sort at La Tourgue."

"Oh yes, indeed, monseigneur! I do not know the passages that monseigneur spoke of; I only know that of La Tourgue, because I belong to the neighborhood. Into the bargain, there is nobody but myself who does know it. It was not talked about. It was forbidden, because it had been used in the time of Monsieur de Rohan's wars. My father knew the secret, and showed it to me. I know how to get in and out. If I am in the forest, I can go into the tower, and if I am in the tower, I can go into the forest, without any body's seeing me. When the enemy enters there is no longer any one there. That is what the passage of La Tourgue is. Oh, I know it."

The old man remained silent for a moment.

"It is evident that you deceive yourself: if there were such a secret, I should know it."

"Monseigneur, I am certain. There is a stone that turns."

"Ah, good! You peasants believe in stones that turn and stones that sing, and stones that go at night to drink from the neighboring brook. A pack of nonsense."

"But since I have made the stone turn——"

"Just as others have heard it sing. Comrade, La Tourgue is a fortress, sure and strong, easy to defend; but anybody who counted on a subterranean passage for getting out of it would be silly indeed."

"But, monseigneur——"

The old man shrugged his shoulders.

"We are losing time; let us talk of what concerns us."

The peremptory tone cut short Halmalo's persistence.

The unknown resumed:

"To continue. Listen. From Rougefeu you will go to the wood of Montchevrier; Benedicité is there, the chief of the Twelve. There is another good fellow. He says his *Bénédicité* while he has people shot. War and sensibility do not go together. From Montchevrier, you will go——"

He broke off.

"I forgot the money."

He took from his pocket a purse and a pocket-book, and put them in Halmalo's hand.

"There are thirty thousand livres in assignats in the pocket-book —something like three pounds ten sous; it is true the assignats are false, but the real ones are just as worthless. In the purse—attention —there are a hundred gold louis. I give you all I have. I have no

need of any thing here. Besides, it is better that no money should be found on me. I resume. From Montchevrier you will go to Antrain, where you will see Monsieur de Frotté; from Antrain to La Jupellière, where you will see De Rochecotte; from La Jupellière to Noirieux, where you will find the Abbé Baudoin. Can you recollect all this?"

"Like my paternoster."

"You will see Monsieur Dubois-Guy at Saint-Brice-en-Cogles, Monsieur de Turpin at Morannes, which is a fortified town, and the Prince de Talmont at Château-Gonthier."

"Shall I be spoken to by a prince?"

"Since I speak to you."

Halmalo took off his hat.

"Madame's *fleur-de-lis* will insure you a good reception everywhere. Do not forget that you are going into the country of mountaineers and rustics. Disguise yourself. It will be easy to do. These republicans are so stupid that you may pass anywhere with a blue coat, a three-cornered hat, and a tricolored cockade. There are no longer regiments, there are no longer uniforms; the companies are not numbered; each man puts on any rag he pleases. You will go to Saint-Mhervé; there you will see Gaulier, called Great Peter. You will go to the cantonment of Parné, where the men blacken their faces. They put gravel into their guns, and a double charge of powder, in order to make more noise. It is well done; but tell them, above all, to kill—kill—kill! You will go to the camp of the Vache Noire, which is on a height; to the middle of the wood of La Charnie, then to the camp Avoine, then to the camp Vert, then to the camp of the Fourmis. You will go to the Grand Bordage, which is also called the Haut de Pré, and is inhabited by a widow whose daughter married Treton, nicknamed the Englishman. Grand Bordage is in the parish of Quelaines. You will visit Epineux-le-Chevreuil, Sillé-le-Guillaume, Parannes, and all the men in all of the woods. You will make friends, and you will send them to the borders of the high and the low Maine; you will see Jean Treton in the parish of Vaisges, Sans Regret at Bignon, Chambord at Bonchamps, the brothers Corbin at Maisoncelles, and the Petit-sans-Peur at Saint-John-on-Erve. He is the one who is called Bourdoiseau. All that done, and the watch-word—*Revolt! No quarter!*—given everywhere, you will join the grand army, the Catholic and royal army, wherever it may be. You will see D'Elbée, De Lescure, De la Rochejacquelein, all the chiefs who may chance to be still living. You will show them my token of command. They all know what it means. You are only a sailor, but Cathelineau is only a carter. This is what you must say to them from me: 'It is time to join the two wars, the great and the little.

The great makes the most noise; the little does the most execution. The Vendée is good—*Chouannerie* is worse; and in civil war the worst is the best. The goodness of a war is judged by the amount of bad it does.'"

He paused.

"Halmalo, I say all this to you. You do not understand the words, but you comprehend the things themselves. I gained confidence in you from seeing you manage the boat. You do not understand geometry, yet you perform sea-manœuvres that are marvelous. He who can manage a boat can pilot an insurrection: from the way in which you have conducted this sea intrigue, I am certain you will fulfill all my commands well. I resume. You will tell the whole to the chiefs, in your own way, of course, but it will be well told. I prefer the war of the forest to the war of the plain; I have no wish to set a hundred thousand peasants in line, and exposed to Carnot's artillery and the grapeshot of the Blues. In less than a month I mean to have five hundred thousand sharpshooters ambushed in the woods. The Republican army is my game. Poaching is our way of waging war. Mine is the strategy of the thickets. Good; there is still another expression you will not catch; no matter, you will seize this: *No quarter, and ambushes everywhere.* I depend more on bush fighting than on regular battles. You will add that the English are with us. We catch the Republic between two fires. Europe assists us. Let us make an end of the Revolution. Kings will wage a war of kingdoms against it; let us wage a war of parishes. You will say this. Have you understood?"

"Yes. Put all to fire and sword."

"That is it."

"No quarter."

"Not to a soul. That is it."

"I will go everywhere."

"And be careful. For in this country it is easy to become a dead man."

"Death does not concern me. He who takes his first step uses perhaps his last shoes."

"You are a brave fellow."

"And if I am asked monseigneur's name?"

"It must not be known yet. You will say you do not know it, and that will be the truth."

"Where shall I see monseigneur again?"

"Where I shall be."

"How shall I know?"

"Because all the world will know. I shall be talked of before eight

days go by; I shall make examples; I shall avenge religion and the king, and you will know well that it is I of whom they speak."

"I understand."

"Forget nothing."

"Be tranquil."

"Now go. May God guide you! Go."

"I will do all that you have bidden me. I will go. I will speak. I will obey. I will command."

"Good."

"And if I succeed——"

"I will make you a knight of Saint Louis."

"Like my brother. And if I fail, you will have me shot?"

"Like your brother."

"Done, monseigneur."

The old man bent his head and seemed to fall into a sombre reverie. When he raised his eyes he was alone. Halmalo was only a black spot disappearing on the horizon.

The sun had just set.

The sea-mews and the hooded gulls flew homeward from the darkening ocean.

That sort of inquietude which precedes the night made itself felt in space. The green frogs croaked; the kingfishers flew whistling out of the pools; the gulls and the rooks kept up their evening tumult; the cry of the shore birds could be heard, but not a human sound. The solitude was complete. Not a sail in the bay, not a peasant in the fields. As far as the eye could reach stretched a deserted plain. The great sand-thistles shivered. The white sky of twilight cast a vast livid pallor over the shore. In the distance the pools scattered over the plain looked like great sheets of pewter spread flat upon the ground. The wind hurried in from the sea with a moan.

Gelimarch

BOOK IV

TELLMARCH

CHAPTER I

THE TOP OF THE DUNE

THE old man waited till Halmalo disappeared, then he drew his fisherman's cloak closely about him and set out on his course. He walked with slow steps, thinking deeply. He took the direction of Huisnes, while Halmalo went toward Beauvoir.

Behind him, an enormous black triangle, with a cathedral for tiara and a fortress for breastplate, with its two great towers to the east, one round, the other square, helping to support the weight of the church and village, rose Mount Saint Michael, which is to the ocean what the Pyramid of Cheops is to the desert.

The quicksands of Mount Saint Michael's Bay insensibly displace their dunes. Between Huisnes and Ardevon there was at that time a very high one, which is now completely effaced. This dune, leveled by an equinoctial storm, had the peculiarity of being very ancient; on its summit stood a commemorative column, erected in the twelfth century, in memory of the council held at Avranches against the assassins of Saint Thomas of Canterbury. From the top of this dune the whole district could be seen, and one could fix the points of the compass.

The old man ascended it.

When he reached the top, he sat down on one of the projections of the stones, with his back against the pillar, and began to study the kind of geographical chart spread beneath his feet. He seemed to be seeking a route in a district which had once been familiar. In the whole of this vast landscape, made indistinct by the twilight, there was nothing clearly defined but the horizon stretching black against the sky.

He could perceive the roofs of eleven towns and villages; could distinguish for several leagues' distance all the bell-towers of the coast, which were built very high to serve in case of need as landmarks to boats at sea.

At the end of a few minutes the old man appeared to have found what he sought in this dim clearness; his eyes rested on an inclosure of trees, walls, and roofs, partially visible midway between the plain and the wood; it was a farm. He nodded his head in the satisfied way a man does who says to himself, "There it is," and began to trace with his finger a route across the fields and hedges. From time to time he examined a shapeless, indistinct object stirring on the principal roof of the farm, and seemed to ask himself, "What can it be?" It was colorless and confused, owing to the gloom; it floated—therefore it was not a weather-cock; and there was no reason why it should be a flag.

He was weary; he remained in his resting-place and yielded passively to the vague forgetfulness which the first moments of repose bring over a tired man.

There is an hour of the day which may be called noiseless: it is the serene hour of early evening. It was about him now. He enjoyed it; he looked, he listened—to what? The tranquillity. Even savage natures have their moments of melancholy. Suddenly this tranquillity was not troubled, but accentuated by the voices of persons passing below—the voices of women and children. It was like a chime of joy-bells unexpectedly ringing amid the shadows. The underbrush hid the group from whence the voices came, but it was moving slowly along the foot of the dune toward the plain and the forest. The clear, fresh tones

reached distinctly the pensive old man; they were so near that he could catch every word.

A woman's voice said:
"We must hurry ourselves, Flécharde. Is this the way?"

"No; yonder."

The dialogue went on between the two voices—one high-pitched, the other low and timid.

"What is the name of the farm we are stopping at?"

"L'Herbe-en-Pail."

"Will it take us much longer to get there?"

"A good quarter of an hour."

"We must hurry on to get our soup."

"Yes; we are late."

"We shall have to run. But those brats of yours are tired. We are only two women; we can't carry three brats. And you—you are already carrying one, my Flécharde. A regular lump of lead. You have weaned the little gormandizer, but you carry her all the same. A bad habit. Do me the favor to make her walk. Oh, very well—so much the worse! The soup will be cold."

"Oh, what good shoes these are that you gave me! I should think they had been made for me."

"It is better than going barefooted, eh?"

"Hurry up, René-Jean!"

"He is the very one that hindered us. He must needs chatter with all the little peasant girls he met. Oh, he shows the man already!"

"Yes, indeed; why, he is going on five years old."

"I say, René-Jean, what made you talk to that little girl in the village?"

A child's voice—that of a boy—replied:

"Because she was an acquaintance of mine."

"What, you know her?" asked the woman.

"Yes, ever since this morning; she played some games with me."

"Oh! what a man you are!" cried the woman. "We have only been three days in the neighborhood; that creature there is no bigger than your fist, and he has found a sweetheart already!"

The voices grew fainter and fainter; then every sound died away.

CHAPTER II

AURES HABET, ET NON AUDIET

THE old man sat motionless. He was not thinking, scarcely dreaming. About him was serenity, rest, safety, solitude. It was still broad daylight on the dune, but almost dark in the plain, and quite night in the forest. The moon was floating up the east; a few stars dotted the pale blue of the zenith. This man, though full of preoccupation and stern cares, lost himself in the ineffable sweetness of the infinite. He felt within him the obscure dawn of hope, if the word hope may be applied to the workings of civil warfare. For the instant it seemed to him that, in escaping from that inexorable sea, and touching land once more, all danger had vanished. No one knew his name; he was alone, escaped from the enemy, having left no trace behind him, for the sea leaves no track; hidden, ignored; not even suspected. He felt an indescribable calm; a little more and he would have fallen asleep.

What made the strange charm of this tranquil home to that man, a prey within and without to such tumults, was the profound silence alike in earth and sky.

He heard nothing but the wind from the sea; but the wind is a continual bass, which almost ceases to be a noise, so accustomed does the ear become to its tone.

Suddenly he started to his feet.

His attention had been quickly awakened; he looked about the horizon. Then his glance fixed eagerly upon a particular point. What he looked at was the belfry of Cormeray, which rose before him at the extremity of the plain. Something very extraordinary was indeed going on within it.

The belfry was clearly defined against the sky; he could see the tower surmounted by the spire, and between the two the cage for the

bell, square, without penthouse, open at the four sides after the fashion of Breton belfries.

Now this cage appeared alternately to open and shut at regular intervals; its lofty opening showed entirely white, then black; the sky could be seen for an instant through it, then it disappeared; a gleam of light would come, then an eclipse, and the opening and shutting succeeded each other from moment to moment with the regularity of a hammer striking its anvil.

This belfry of Cormeray was in front of the old man, about two leagues from the place where he stood. He looked to his right at the belfry of Baguer-Pican, which rose equally straight and distinct against the horizon: its cage was opening and shutting, like that of Cormeray.

He looked to his left, at the belfry of Tanis: the cage of the belfry of Tanis opened and shut, like that of Baguer-Pican.

He examined all the belfries upon the horizon, one after another: to his left those of Courtils, of Précey, of Crollon, and the Croix-Avranchin; to his right the belfries of Raz-sur-Couesnon, of Mordrey, and of the Pas; in front of him, the belfry of Pontorson. The cages of all these belfries were alternately white and black.

What did this mean?

It meant that all the bells were swinging. In order to appear and disappear in this way they must be violently rung.

What was it for? The tocsin, without doubt.

The tocsin was sounding, sounding madly—on every side, from all the belfries, in all the parishes, in all the villages; and yet he could hear nothing.

This was owing to the distance and the wind from the sea, which, sweeping in the opposite direction, carried every sound of the shore out beyond the horizon.

All these mad bells calling on every side, and at the same time this silence; nothing could be more sinister.

The old man looked and listened. He did not hear the tocsin; he saw it. It was a strange sensation, that of seeing the tocsin.

Against whom was this rage of the bells directed?

Against whom did this tocsin sound?

CHAPTER III

USEFULNESS OF BIG LETTERS

ASSUREDLY some one was snared.

Who?

A shiver ran through this man of steel.

It could not be he? His arrival could not have been discovered: it was impossible that the acting representative should have received information; he had scarcely landed. The corvette had evidently foundered, and not a man had escaped. And even on the corvette, Boisberthelot and La Vieuville alone knew his name.

The belfries kept up their savage sport. He mechanically watched and counted them, and his meditations, pushed from one conjecture to another, had those fluctuations caused by a sudden change from complete security to a terrible consciousness of peril. Still, after all, this tocsin might be accounted for in many ways, and he ended by reassuring himself with the repetition of—"In short, no one knows of my arrival, and no one knows my name."

During the last few seconds there had been a slight noise above and behind him. This noise was like the fluttering of leaves. He paid no attention to it at first, but as the sound continued—one might have said insisted on making itself heard—he turned round at length. It was in fact a leaf, but a leaf of paper. The wind was trying to tear off a large placard pasted on the stone above his head. This placard had been very lately fastened there, for it was still moist, and offered a hold to the wind, which had begun to play with and was detaching it.

The old man had ascended the dune on the opposite side, and had not seen this placard as he came up.

He mounted the coping where he had been seated, and laid his hand on the corner of the paper which the wind moved. The sky was clear, for the June twilights are long; the bottom of the dune was

shadowy, but the top in light; a portion of the placard was printed in large letters, and there was still light enough for him to make it out. He read this:

"THE FRENCH REPUBLIC ONE AND INDIVISIBLE.

"We, Prieur, of the Marne, acting representative of the people with the army of the coast of Cherbourg, give notice: The *ci-devant* Marquis de Lantenac, Viscount de Fontenay, so-called Breton prince, secretly landed on the coast of Granville, is declared an outlaw.—A price is set on his head.—Any person bringing him, alive or dead, will receive the sum of sixty thousand livres.—This amount will not be paid in assignats, but in gold.—A battalion of the Cherbourg coast-guards will be immediately dispatched for the apprehension of the so-called Marquis de Lantenac.

"The parishes are ordered to lend every assistance.

"Given at the Town-hall of Granville, this 2d of June, 1793.

"(Signed) PRIEUR, DE LA MARNE."

Under this name was another signature, in much smaller characters, and which the failing light prevented the old man's deciphering.

The old man pulled his hat over his eyes, closed his sea-jacket up to his chin, and rapidly descended the dune.

It was unsafe to remain longer on this summit.

He had perhaps already stayed too long; the top of the dune was the only point in the landscape which still remained visible.

When he reached the obscurity of the bottom, he slackened his pace.

He took the route which he had traced for himself toward the farm, evidently having reason to believe that he should be safe in that direction.

The plain was deserted. There were no passers-by at that hour.

He stopped behind a thicket of underbrush, undid his cloak, turned his vest the hairy side out, refastened his rag of a mantle about his neck by its cord, and resumed his way.

The moon was shining.

He reached a point where two roads branched off; an old stone cross stood there. Upon the pedestal of the cross he could distinguish a white square which was most probably a notice like that he had just read. He went toward it.

"Where are you going?" said a voice.

He turned round.

A man was standing in the hedge-row, tall like himself, old like

THE STONE CROSS.

himself, with white hair like his own, and garments even more dilapidated—almost his double. This man leaned on a long stick.

He repeated:

"I ask you where you are going?"

"In the first place, where am I?" returned he, with an almost haughty composure.

The man replied:

"You are in the seigneury of Tanis. I am its beggar; you are its lord."

"I?"

"Yes, you, my Lord Marquis de Lantenac."

CHAPTER IV

THE CAIMAND

THE Marquis de Lantenac—we shall henceforth call him by his name—answered quietly:

"So be it. Give me up."

The man continued:

"We are both at home here: you in the castle, I in the bushes."

"Let us finish. Do your work. Betray me," said the marquis.

The man went on:

"You were going to the farm of Herbe-en-Pail, were you not?"

"Yes."

"Do not go."

"Why?"

"Because the Blues are there."

"Since how long?"

"These three days."

"Did the people of the farm and the hamlet resist?"

"No; they opened all the doors."

"Ah!" said the marquis.

The man pointed with his finger toward the roof of the farm-house, which could be perceived above the trees at a short distance.

"You can see the roof, marquis?"

"Yes."

"Do you see what there is above it?"

"Something floating?"

"Yes."

"It is a flag."

"The tricolor," said the man.

This was the object which had attracted the marquis's attention as he stood on the top of the dune.

"Is not the tocsin sounding?" asked the marquis.

"Yes."

"On what account?"

"Evidently on yours."

"But I can not hear it."

"The wind carries the sound the other way."

The man added:

"Did you see your placard?"

"Yes."

"They are hunting you;" and casting a glance toward the farm, he added—"There is a demi-battalion there."

"Of republicans?"

"Parisians."

"Very well," said the marquis; "march on."

And he took a step in the direction of the farm.

The man seized his arm.

"Do not go there."

"Where do you wish me to go?"

"Home with me."

The marquis looked steadily at the mendicant.

"Listen, my lord marquis. My house is not fine; but it is safe. A cabin lower than a cave. For flooring a bed of sea-weed, for ceiling a roof of branches and grass. Come. At the farm you will be shot. In my house you may go to sleep. You must be tired; and to-morrow morning the Blues will march on, and you can go where you please."

The marquis studied this man.

"Which side are you on?" he asked. "Are you republican? Are you royalist?"

"I am a beggar."

"Neither royalist nor republican?"

"I believe not."

"Are you for or against the king?"

"I have no time for that sort of thing."

"What do you think of what is passing?"

"I have nothing to live on."

"Still you come to my assistance."

"Because I saw you were outlawed. What is the law? So one can be beyond its pale. I do not comprehend. Am I inside the law? Am I outside the law? I don't in the least know. To die of hunger—is that being within the law?"

"How long have you been dying of hunger?"

"All my life."

"And you save me?"

"Yes."

"Why?"

"Because I said to myself, 'There is one poorer than I. I have the right to breathe; he has not.'"

"That is true. And you save me?"

"Of course; we are brothers, monseigneur. I ask for bread—you ask for life. We are a pair of beggars."

"But do you know there is a price set on my head?"

"Yes."

"How did you know?"

"I read the placard."

"You know how to read?"

"Yes; and to write, too. Why should I be a brute?"

"Then, since you can read, and since you have seen the notice, you know that a man would earn sixty thousand livres by giving me up?"

"I know it."

"Not in assignats."

"Yes, I know; in gold."

"Sixty thousand livres—do you know it is a fortune?"

"Yes."

"And that anybody apprehending me would make his fortune?"

"Very well—what next?"

"His fortune!"

"That is exactly what I thought. When I saw you, I said: 'Just to think that anybody by giving up that man yonder would gain sixty thousand livres, and make his fortune!' Let us hasten to hide him."

The marquis followed the beggar.

They entered a thicket; the mendicant's den was there. It was a sort of chamber which a great old oak had allowed the man to take possession of within its heart; it was dug down among its roots, and covered by its branches. It was dark, low, hidden, invisible. There was room for two persons.

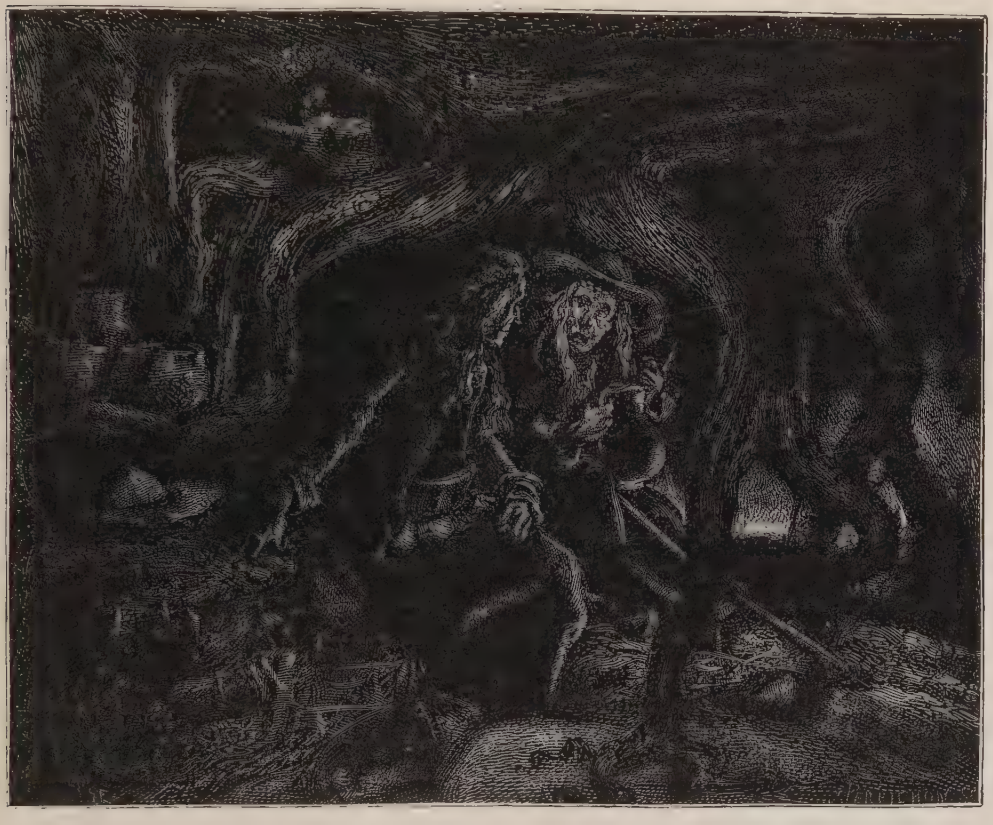
"I foresaw that I might have a guest," said the mendicant.

This species of underground lodging, less rare in Brittany than people fancy, is called in the peasant dialect a *carnichot*. The name is also applied to hiding-places contrived in thick walls.

It was furnished with a few jugs, a pallet of straw or dried wrack, with a thick covering of kersey; some tallow-dips, a flint and steel, and a bundle of furze twigs for tinder.

They stooped low, crept rather, penetrated into the chamber, which

the great roots of the tree divided into fantastic compartments, and seated themselves on the heap of dry sea-weed which served as a bed. The space between two of the roots, which made the doorway, allowed a little light to enter. Night had come on, but the eye adapts itself to the darkness, and one always finds at last a little day among the shadows. A reflection from the moon's rays dimly silvered the entrance. In a corner was a jug of water, a loaf of buckwheat bread, and some chestnuts.



"Let us sup," said the beggar.

They divided the chestnuts; the marquis contributed his morsel of biscuit; they bit into the same black loaf, and drank out of the jug, one after the other.

They conversed.

The marquis began to question this man.

"So, no matter whether any thing or nothing happens, it is all the same to you?"

"Pretty much. You are the lords, you others. Those are your affairs."

"But after all, present events——"

"Pass away up out of my reach."

The beggar added presently:

"Then there are things that go on still higher up: the sun that rises, the moon that increases or diminishes; those are the matters I occupy myself about."

He took a sip from the jug, and said:

"The good fresh water!"

Then he asked:

"How do you find the water, monseigneur?"

"What is your name?" inquired the marquis.

"My name is Tellmarch; but I am called the *Caimand*."

"I understand. *Caimand* is a word of the district."

"Which means beggar. I am also nicknamed *Le Vieux*. I have been called the old man these forty years."

"Forty years! But you were a young man then."

"I never was young. You remain so always, on the contrary, my lord marquis. You have the legs of a boy of twenty; you can climb the great dune; as for me, I begin to find it difficult to walk; at the end of a quarter of a league I am tired. Nevertheless, our age is the same. But the rich, they have an advantage over us—they eat every day. Eating is a preservative."

After a silence the mendicant resumed:

"Poverty, riches—that makes a terrible business. That is what brings on the catastrophes. At least, I have that idea. The poor want to be rich; the rich are not willing to be poor. I think that is about what it is at the bottom. I do not mix myself up with matters. The events are the events. I am neither for the creditor nor for the debtor. I know there is a debt, and that it is being paid. That is all. I would rather they had not killed the king; but it would be difficult for me to say why. After that, somebody will answer, 'But remember how they used to hang poor fellows on trees for nothing at all.' See; just for a miserable gunshot fired at one of the king's roebucks, I myself saw a man hung who had a wife and seven children. There is much to say on both sides."

Again he was silent for a while. Then:

"I am a little of a bone-setter, a little of a doctor; I know the herbs, I study plants; the peasants see me absent—preoccupied—and that makes me pass for a sorcerer. Because I dream, they think I must be wise."

"You belong to the neigborhood?" asked the marquis.

"I never was out of it."

"You know me?"

"Of course. The last time I saw you was when you passed through here two years ago. You went from here to England. A little while since I saw a man on the top of the dune—a very tall man. Tall men are rare; Brittany is a country of small men. I looked close; I had read the notice; I said to myself, 'Ah ha!' And when you came down there was moonlight, and I recognized you."

"And yet I do not know you."

"You have seen me, but you never looked at me."

And Tellmarch the Caimand added:

"I looked at you, though. The giver and the beggar do not look with the same eyes."

"Had I encountered you formerly?"

"Often—I am your beggar. I was the mendicant at the foot of the road from your castle. You have given me alms, but he who gives does not notice; he who receives examines and observes. When you say mendicant, you say spy. But as for me, though I am often sad, I try not to be a malicious spy. I used to hold out my hand; you only saw the hand, and you threw into it the charity I needed in the morning in order that I might not die in the evening. I have often been twenty-four hours without eating. Sometimes a penny is life. I owe you my life—I pay the debt."

"That is true; you save me."

"Yes, I save you, monseigneur."

And Tellmarch's voice grew solemn as he added:

"On one condition."

"And that?"

"That you are not come here to do harm."

"I come here to do good," said the marquis.

"Let us sleep," said the beggar.

They lay down side by side on the sea-weed bed. The mendicant fell asleep immediately. The marquis, although very tired, remained thinking deeply for a few moments—he gazed fixedly at the beggar in the shadow, and then lay back. To lie on that bed was to lie on the ground; he projected by this to put his ear to the earth and listen. He could hear a strange buzzing underground. We know that sound stretches down into the depths: he could hear the noise of the bells.

The tocsin was still sounding.

The marquis fell asleep.

CHAPTER V

SIGNED GAUVAIN

IT was daylight when he awoke. The mendicant was standing up—not in the den, for he could not hold himself erect there—but without, on the sill. He was leaning on his stick. The sun shone upon his face.

"Monseigneur," said Tellmarch, "four o'clock has just sounded from the belfry of Tanis. I could count the strokes. Therefore the wind has changed: it is the land breeze; I can hear no other sound, so the tocsin has ceased. Every thing is tranquil about the farm and hamlet of Herbe-en-Pail. The Blues are asleep or gone. The worst of the danger is over; it will be wise for us to separate. It is my hour for setting out."

He indicated a point in the horizon.

"I am going that way."

He pointed in the opposite direction.

"Go you this way."

The beggar made the marquis a gesture of salute. He pointed to the remains of the supper.

"Take the chestnuts with you if you are hungry."

A moment after he disappeared among the trees.

The marquis rose and departed in the direction which Tellmarch had indicated.

It was that charming hour called in the old Norman peasant dialect "the song-sparrow of the day." The finches and the hedge-sparrows flew chirping about. The marquis followed the path by which they had come on the previous night. He passed out of the thicket and found himself at the fork of the road, marked by the stone cross. The placard was still there, looking white, fairly gay, in the rising sun. He remembered that there was something at the bottom of the placard which he

had not been able to read the evening before, on account of the twilight and the size of the letters. He went up to the pedestal of the cross. Under the signature "PRIEUR, DE LA MARNE," there were yet two other lines in small characters:

"The identity of the ci-devant Marquis de Lantenac established, he will be immediately shot. *Signed: Chief of battalion commanding the exploring column*, GAUVAIN."

"Gauvain!" said the marquis. He stood still thinking deeply, his eyes fixed on the notice.

"Gauvain!" he repeated.

He resumed his march; turned about; looked again at the cross, walked back, and once more read the placard.

Then he went slowly away. Had any person been near, he might have been heard to murmur, in a half-voice, "Gauvain!"

From the sunken paths into which he retreated he could only see the roofs of the farm which lay to the left. He passed along the side of a steep eminence covered with furze, of the species called long-thorn, in blossom. The summit of this height was one of those points of land named in Brittany a *hure*.

At the foot of the eminence the gaze lost itself among the trees. The foliage seemed bathed in light. All nature was filled with the deep joy of the morning.

Suddenly this landscape became terrible. It was like the bursting forth of an ambuscade. An appalling, indescribable trumpeting, made by savage cries and gun-shots, struck upon these fields and these woods filled with sunlight, and there could be seen rising from the side toward the farm a great smoke, cut by clear flames, as if the hamlet and the farm buildings were consuming like a truss of burning straw. It was sudden and fearful; the abrupt change from tranquillity to fury; an explosion of hell in the midst of dawn; a horror without transition. There was fighting in the direction of Herbe-en-Pail. The marquis stood still.

There is no man in a similar case who would not feel curiosity stronger than a sense of the peril. One must know what is happening, if one perish in the attempt. He mounted the eminence along the bottom of which passed the sunken path by which he had come. From there he could see, but he could also be seen. He remained on the top for some instants. He looked about.

There was, in truth, a fusillade and a conflagration. He could hear the cries, he could see the flames. The farm appeared the centre of

some terrible catastrophe. What could it be? Was the farm of Herbe-en-Pail attacked? But by whom? Was it a battle? Was it not rather a military execution? Very often the Blues punished refractory farms and villages by setting them on fire. They were ordered to do so by a revolutionary decree; they burned, for example, every farm-house and hamlet where the tree-cutting prescribed by law had been neglected, or no roads opened among the thickets for the passage of the republican cavalry. Only very lately, the parish of Bourgon, near Ernée, had been thus destroyed. Was Herbe-en-Pail receiving similar treatment? It was evident that none of the strategic routes called for by the decree had been made among the copses and inclosures. Was this the punishment for such neglect? Had an order been received by the advance-guard occupying the farm? Did not this troop make part of one of those exploring divisions called the "*infernal columns?*"

A bristling and savage thicket surrounded on all sides the eminence upon which the marquis had posted himself for an outlook. This thicket, which was called the grove of Herbe-en-Pail, but which had the proportions of a wood, stretched to the farm, and concealed, like all Breton copses, a network of ravines, by-paths, and deep cuttings, labyrinths where the republican armies lost themselves.

The execution, if it were an execution, must have been a ferocious one, for it was short. It had been, like all brutal deeds, quickly accomplished. The atrocity of civil wars admits of these savage vagaries. While the marquis, multiplying conjectures, hesitating to descend, hesitating to remain, listened and watched, this crash of extermination ceased, or, more correctly speaking, vanished. The marquis took note of something in the thicket that was like the scattering of a wild and joyous troop. A frightful rushing about made itself heard beneath the trees. From the farm the band had thrown themselves into the wood. Drums beat. No more gunshots were fired. Now it resembled a battue; they seemed to search, follow, track. They were evidently hunting some person; the noise was scattered and deep; it was a confusion of words of wrath and triumph; of indistinct cries and clamor. Suddenly, as an outline becomes visible in a cloud of smoke, something is articulated clearly and distinctly amid this tumult: it was a name—a name repeated by a thousand voices—and the marquis plainly heard this cry:

"Lantenac! Lantenac! The Marquis de Lantenac!"

It was he whom they were looking for.

"I AM THE MARQUIS DE LANTENAC!"

CHAPTER VI

THE WHIRLIGIGS OF CIVIL WAR

SUDDENLY all about him, from all sides at the same time, the copse filled with muskets, bayonets, and sabres, a tri-colored flag rose in the half-light, the cry of "Lantenac!" burst forth in his very ear, and at his feet, behind the brambles and branches, savage faces appeared.

The marquis was alone, standing on a height, visible from every part of the wood. He could scarcely see those who shrieked his name; but he was seen by all. If a thousand muskets were in the wood, there was he like a target. He could distinguish nothing among the brushwood but burning eyeballs fastened upon him.

He took off his hat, turned back the brim, tore a long, dry thorn from a furze-bush, drew from his pocket a white cockade, fastened the upturned brim and the cockade to the hat with the thorn, and putting back on his head the hat, whose lifted edge showed the white cockade, and left his face in full view, he cried in a loud voice that rang like a trumpet through the forest:

"I am the man you seek. I am the Marquis de Lantenac, Viscount de Fontenay, Breton prince, lieutenant-general of the armies of the king. Now make an end! Aim! Fire!"

And, tearing open with both hands his goat-skin vest, he bared his naked breast.

He looked down, expecting to meet leveled guns, and saw himself surrounded by kneeling men.

Then a great shout arose:

"Long live Lantenac! Long live monseigneur! Long live the general!"

At the same time hats were flung into the air, sabres whirled joyously, and through all the thicket could be seen rising sticks on whose

points waved caps of brown woolen. He was surrounded by a Vendean band.

This troop had knelt at sight of him.

Old legends tell of strange beings that were found in the ancient Thuringian forests—a race of giants, more and less than men, who were regarded by the Romans as horrible monsters, by the Germans as divine incarnations, and who, according to the encounter, ran the risk of being exterminated or adored.

The marquis felt something of the sentiment which must have shaken one of those creatures when, expecting to be treated like a monster, he suddenly found himself worshiped as a god.

All those eyes, full of terrible lightnings, were fastened on him with a sort of savage love.

This crowd was armed with muskets, sabres, scythes, poles, sticks; they wore great beavers or brown caps, with white cockades, a profusion of rosaries and amulets; wide breeches open at the knee, jackets of skins, leather gaiters, the calves of their legs bare, their hair long; some with a ferocious look, all with an open one.

A man, young and of noble mien, passed through the kneeling throng, and hurried toward the marquis. Like the peasants, he wore a turned-up beaver and a white cockade, and was wrapped in a fur jacket; but his hands were white and his linen fine, and he wore over his vest a white silk scarf, from which hung a gold-hilted sword.

When he reached the *hure* he threw aside his hat, untied his scarf, bent one knee to the ground, and presented the sword and scarf to the marquis, saying:

"We were indeed seeking you, and we have found you. Accept the sword of command. These men are yours now. I was their leader; I mount in grade, for I become your soldier. Accept our homage, my lord. General, give me your orders."

Then he made a sign, and some men who carried a tricolored flag moved out of the wood. They marched up to where the marquis stood, and laid the banner at his feet. It was the flag which he had just caught sight of through the trees.

"General," said the young man who had presented to him the sword and scarf, "this is the flag we just took from the Blues, who held the farm of Herbe-en-Pail. Monseigneur, I am named Gavard. I belong to the Marquis de la Rouarie."

"It is well," said the marquis.

And, calm and grave, he put on the scarf.

Then he drew his sword, and waving it above his head, he cried:

"Up! Long live the king!"

All rose. Through the depths of the wood swelled a wild triumphant clamor: "*Long live the king! Long live our marquis! Long live Lantenac!*"

The marquis turned toward Gavard:

"How many are you?"

"Seven thousand."

And as they descended the eminence, while the peasants cleared away the furze-bushes to make a path for the Marquis de Lantenac, Gavard continued:

"Monseigneur, nothing more simple. All can be explained in a word. It only needed a spark. The reward offered by the Republic, in revealing your presence, roused the whole district for the king. Besides that, we had been secretly warned by the mayor of Granville, who is one of our men, the same who saved the Abbé Ollivier. Last night they sounded the toscin."

"For whom?"

"For you."

"Ah!" said the marquis.

"And here we are," pursued Gavard.

"And you are seven thousand?"

"To-day. We shall be fifteen thousand to-morrow. It is the Breton contingent. When Monsieur Henri de la Rochejacquelein set out to join the Catholic army, the tocsin was sounded, and in one night six

parishes—Isernay, Corqueux, the Echaubroignes, the Aubiers, Saint-Aubin, and Nueil—brought him ten thousand men. They had no munitions; they found in the house of a quarry-master sixty pounds of blasting-powder, and M. de la Rochejacquelein set off with that. We were certain you must be in some part of this forest, and we were seeking you."

"And you attacked the Blues at the farm of Herbe-en-Pail?"

"The wind prevented their hearing the tocsin. They suspected nothing; the people of the hamlet, who are a set of clowns, received them well. This morning we surrounded the farm, the Blues were asleep, and we did the thing out of hand. I have a horse. Will you deign to accept it, general?"

"Yes."

A peasant led up a white horse with military caparisons. The marquis mounted without the assistance Gavard offered him.

"Hurrah!" cried the peasants. The cries of the English were greatly in use along the Breton coast, in constant communication as it was with the Channel Islands.

Gavard made a military salute, and asked:

"Where will you make your head-quarters, monseigneur?"

"At first in the Forest of Fougères."

"It is one of your seven forests, my lord marquis."

"We must have a priest."

"We have one."

"Who?"

"The curate of the Chapelle-Erbrée."

"I know him. He has made the voyage to Jersey."

A priest stepped out of the ranks, and said:

"Three times."

The marquis turned his head.

"Good-morning, Monsieur le Curé. You have work before you."

"So much the better, my lord marquis."

"You will have to hear confessions. Those who wish. Nobody will be forced."

"My lord marquis," said the priest, "at Guéménée, Gaston forces the republicans to confess."

"He is a hairdresser," said the marquis; "death ought to be free."

Gavard, who had gone to give some orders, returned.

"General, I wait your commands."

"First, the rendezvous in the Forest of Fougères. Let the men disperse, and make their way there."

"The order is given."

"Did you not tell me that the people of Herbe-en-Pail had received the Blues well?"

"Yes, general."

"You have burned the house?"

"Yes."

"Have you burned the hamlet?"

"No."

"Burn it."

"The Blues tried to defend themselves, but they were a hundred and fifty, and we were seven thousand."

"Who were they?"

"Santerre's men."

"The one who ordered the drums to beat while the king's head was being cut off? Then it is a regiment of Paris?"

"A half-regiment."

"Its name?"

"General, it had on its flag, 'Battalion of the Bonnet Rouge.'"

"Wild beasts."

"What is to be done with the wounded?"

"Put an end to them."

"What shall we do with the prisoners?"

"Shoot them."

"There are about eighty."

"Shoot the whole."

"There are two women."

"Them also."

"There are three children."

"Carry them off. We will see what shall be done with them."

And the marquis rode on.

CHAPTER VII

"NO MERCY!" (WATCHWORD OF THE COMMUNE)—"NO QUARTER!" (WATCHWORD OF THE PRINCES)

WHILE all this was passing near Tanis, the mendicant had gone toward Crollon. He plunged into the ravines, among the vast silent bowers of shade, inattentive to every thing, and attentive to nothing, as he had himself said; dreamer rather than thinker, for the thoughtful man has an aim, and the dreamer has none; wandering, rambling, pausing, munching here and there a bunch of wild sorrel; drinking at the springs, occasionally raising his head to listen to the distant tumult, again falling back into the bewildering fascination of nature, warming his rags in the sun, hearing sometimes the noise of men, but listening to the song of the birds.

He was old, and moved slowly; he could not walk far; as he had said to the Marquis de Lantenac, a quarter of a league fatigued him: he made a short circuit to the Croix-Avranchin, and evening had come before he returned.

A little beyond Macey, the path he was following led to a sort of culminating point, bare of trees, from whence one could see very far, taking in the whole stretch of the western horizon to the sea.

A column of smoke attracted his attention.

Nothing calmer than smoke, but nothing more startling. There are peaceful smokes, and there are evil ones. The thickness and color of a line of smoke marks the whole difference between war and peace, between fraternity and hatred, between hospitality and the tomb, between life and death. A smoke mounting among the trees may be a symbol of all that is most charming in the world—a heart at home; or a sign of that which is most awful—a conflagration. The whole happiness of man, or his most complete misery, is sometimes expressed in this thin vapor, which the wind scatters at will.

THE MASSACRE AT HERBE-EN-PAIL.

The smoke which Tellmarch saw was disquieting.

It was black, dashed now and then with sudden gleams of red, as if the brasier from which it flowed burned irregularly, and had begun to die out; and it rose above Herbe-en-Pail.

Tellmarch quickened his steps, and walked toward this smoke.

He was very tired, but he must know what this signified.

He reached the summit of a hill, against whose side the hamlet and the farm were nestled.

There was no longer either farm or hamlet.

A heap of ruins was burning still—it was Herbe-en-Pail.

There is something which it is more painful to see burn than a palace—it is a cottage. A cottage on fire is a lamentable sight. It is a devastation swooping down on poverty, the vulture pouncing upon the worms of the ground; there is in it a contradiction which chills the heart.

If we believe the Biblical legend, the sight of a conflagration changed a human being into a statue: for a moment Tellmarch seemed thus transformed. The spectable before his eyes held him motionless. Destruction was completing its work amid unbroken silence. Not a cry arose; not a human sigh mingled with this smoke; this furnace labored, and finished devouring the village, without any noise being heard save the creaking of the timbers and the crackling of the thatch. At moments the smoke parted, the fallen roofs revealed the gaping chambers, the brasier showed all its rubies; rags turned to scarlet, and miserable bits of furniture, tinted with purple, gleamed amid these vermilion interiors, and Tellmarch was dizzied by the sinister bedazzlement of disaster.

Some trees of a chestnut grove near the houses had taken fire, and were blazing.

He listened, trying to catch the sound of a voice, an appeal, a cry; nothing stirred except the flames; every thing was silent, save the conflagration. Was it that all had fled?

Where was the knot of people who lived and toiled at Herbe-en-Pail? What had become of this little band? Tellmarch descended the hill.

A funereal enigma rose before him. He approached without haste, with fixed eyes. He advanced toward this ruin with the slowness of a shadow; he felt like a ghost in this tomb.

He reached what had been the door of the farm-house, and looked into the court, which had no longer any walls, and was confounded with the hamlet grouped about it.

What he had before seen was nothing. He had hitherto only caught sight of the terrible; the horrible appeared to him now.

In the middle of the court was a black heap, vaguely outlined on one side by the flames, on the other by the moonlight. This heap was a mass of men; these men were dead.

All about this human mound spread a great pool, which smoked a little; the flames were reflected in this pool, but it had no need of fire to redden it—it was blood.

Tellmarch went closer. He began to examine these prostrate bodies one after another: they were all dead men.

The moon shone; the conflagration also.

These corpses were the bodies of soldiers. All had their feet bare; their shoes had been taken; their weapons were gone also; they still wore their uniforms, which were blue; here and there he could distinguish among these heaped-up limbs and heads shot-riddled hats with tricolored cockades. They were republicans. They were those Parisians who on the previous evening had been there, all living, keeping garrison at the farm of Herbe-en-Pail. These men had been executed: this was shown by the symmetrical position of the bodies; they had been struck down in order, and with care. They were all quite dead. Not a single death-gasp sounded from the mass.

Tellmarch passed the corpses in review without omitting one; they were all riddled with balls.

Those who had shot them, in haste probably to get elsewhere, had not taken the time to bury them.

As he was preparing to move away, his eyes fell on a low wall in the court, and he saw four feet protruding from one of its angles.

They had shoes on them; they were smaller than the others. Tellmarch went up to this spot. They were women's feet. Two women were lying side by side behind the wall; they also had been shot.

Tellmarch stooped over them. One of the women wore a sort of uniform; by her side was a canteen, bruised and empty; she had been vivandière. She had four balls in her head. She was dead.

Tellmarch examined the other. This was a peasant. She was livid; her mouth open. Her eyes were closed. There was no wound in her head. Her garments, which long marches, no doubt, had worn to rags, were disarranged by her fall, leaving her bosom half naked. Tellmarch pushed her dress aside, and saw on one shoulder the round wound which a ball makes; the shoulder-blade was broken. He looked at her livid breast.

"Nursing mother," he murmured.

He touched her. She was not cold.

She had no hurts beside the broken shoulder-blade and the wound in the shoulder.

"IS THERE NO ONE HERE?"

He put his hand on her heart, and felt a faint throb. She was not dead.

Tellmarch raised himself, and cried out in a terrible voice:

"Is there no one here?"

"Is it you, Caimand?" a voice replied, so low that it could scarcely be heard.

At the same time a head was thrust out of a hole in the ruin. Then another face appeared at another aperture. They were two peasants, who had hidden themselves—the only ones who survived.

The well-known voice of the Caimand had reassured them, and brought them out of the holes in which they had taken refuge.

They advanced toward the old man, both still trembling violently.

Tellmarch had been able to cry out, but he could not talk; strong emotions produce such effects.

He pointed out to them with his finger the woman stretched at his feet.

"Is there still life in her?" asked one of the peasants.

Tellmarch gave an affirmative nod of the head.

"Is the other woman living?" demanded the second man.

Tellmarch shook his head.

The peasant who had first shown himself continued:

"All the others are dead, are they not? I saw the whole. I was in my cellar. How one thanks God at such a moment for not having a family! My house burned. Blessed Saviour! They killed everybody. This woman here had three children—all little. The children cried: 'Mother!' The mother cried: 'My children!' Those who massacred everybody are gone. They were satisfied. They carried off the little ones, and shot the mother. I saw it all. But she is not dead—didn't you say so? She is not dead? Tell us, Caimand, do you think you could save her? Do you want us to help carry her to your *carnichot?*"

Tellmarch made a sign, which signified "Yes."

The wood was close to the farm. They quickly made a litter with branches and ferns. They laid the woman, still motionless, upon it, and set out toward the copse, the two peasants carrying the litter, one at the head, the other at the feet, Tellmarch holding the woman's arm, and feeling her pulse.

As they walked, the two peasants talked; and over the body of the bleeding woman, whose white face was lighted up by the moon, they exchanged frightened ejaculations.

"To kill all!"

"To burn everything!"

"Ah, my God! Is that the way things will go now?"

"It was that tall old man who ordered it to be done."
"Yes; it was he who commanded."
"I did not see while the shooting went on. Was he there?"
"No. He had gone. But no matter; it was all done by his orders."
"Then it was he who did the whole."
"He said, 'Kill! burn! no quarter!'"
"He is a marquis."
"Of course, since he is our marquis."
"How is it they call him now?"
"He is M. de Lantenac."
Tellmarch raised his eyes to heaven, and murmured:
"If I had known!"

BRUTUS Cº
Je rase le Clergé
Je peigne la Noblesse
&
J'accommode le
Tiers Etat.
RUE DES GRES
IN PARIS
F. MEAULLE Sc
GILBERT SD

PART II

IN PARIS

BOOK I

CIMOURDAIN

CHAPTER I

THE STREETS OF PARIS AT THAT TIME

EOPLE lived in public; they ate at tables spread outside the doors; women seated on the steps of the churches made lint as they sang the *Marseillaise.* Park Monceaux and the Luxembourg Gardens were parade-grounds. There were gunsmiths' shops in full work; they manufactured muskets before the eyes of the passers-by, who clapped their hands in applause. The watchword on every lip was, "*Patience; we are in Revolution.*" The people smiled heroically. They went to the theatre as they did at Athens during the Peloponnesian war. One saw playbills such as these pasted at the street corners:—"*The Siege of Thionville;*" "*A Mother saved from the Flames;*" "*The Club of the Careless;*" "*The Eldest of the Popes Joan;*" "*The Philosopher-Soldiers;*" "*The Art of Village Love-making.*"

The Germans were at the gates; a report was current that the King of Prussia had secured boxes at the Opera. Every thing was ter-

rible, and no one was frightened. The mysterious law against the suspected, which was the crime of Merlin of Douai, held a vision of the guillotine above every head. A solicitor named Séran, who had been denounced, awaited his arrest in dressing-gown and slippers, playing his flute at his window. Nobody seemed to have leisure: all the world was in a hurry. Every hat bore a cockade. The women said, "*We are pretty in red caps.*" All Paris seemed to be removing. The curiosity shops were crowded with crowns, mitres, sceptres of gilded wood, and *fleurs-de-lis*—torn down from royal dwellings: it was the demolition of monarchy that went on. Copes were to be seen for sale at the old clothesmen's, and rochets hung on hooks at their doors. At Ramponneau's and the Porcherons, men dressed out in surplices and stoles, and mounted on donkeys caparisoned with chasubles, drank wine at the doors from cathedral ciboria. In the Rue Saint Jacques, barefooted street-pavers stopped the wheelbarrow of a peddler who had boots for sale, and clubbed together to buy fifteen pairs of shoes, which they sent to the Convention "for our soldiers."

Busts of Franklin, Rousseau, Brutus, and, we must add, of Marat, abounded. Under a bust of Marat in the Rue Cloche-Perce was hung in a black wooden frame, and under glass, an address against Malouet, with testimony in support of the charges, and these marginal lines:

"These details were furnished me by the mistress of Silvain Bailly, a good patriotess, who has a liking for me.

"(Signed) MARAT."

The inscription on the Palais Royal fountain—"*Quantos effundit in usus!*"—was hidden under two great canvases painted in distemper, the one representing Cahier de Gerville denouncing to the National Assembly the rallying cry of the "Chiffonistes" of Arles; the other, Louis XVI. brought back from Varennes in his royal carriage, and under the carriage a plank fastened by cords, on each end of which was seated a grenadier with fixed bayonet.

Very few of the larger shops were open; peripatetic haberdashery and toy shops were dragged about by women, lighted by candles, which dropped their tallow on the merchandise. Open-air shops were kept by ex-nuns, in blonde wigs. This mender, darning stockings in a stall, was a countess; that dressmaker a marchioness. Madame de Boufflers inhabited a garret, from whence she could look out at her own hotel. Hawkers ran about offering the "papers of news." Persons who wore cravats that hid their chins were called "the scrofulous." Street-singers swarmed. The crowd hooted Pitou, the royalist song-writer, and a

valiant man into the bargain; he was twenty-two times imprisoned and taken before the revolutionary tribunal for slapping his coat-tails as he pronounced the word *civism*. Seeing that his head was in danger, he exclaimed: "*But it is just the opposite of my head that is in fault!*"—a witticism which made the judges laugh, and saved his life. This Pitou ridiculed the rage for Greek and Latin names; his favorite song was about a cobbler, whom he called *Cujus*, and to whom he gave a wife named *Cujusdam*. They danced the Carmagnole in great circles. They no longer said gentleman and lady, but citizen and citizeness. They danced in the ruined cloisters with the church-lamps lighted on the

altars, with cross-shaped chandeliers hanging from the vaulted roofs, and tombs beneath their feet. Waistcoats of "tyrant's blue" were worn. There were "liberty-cap" shirt-pins made of white, blue, and red stones. The Rue de Richelieu was called the Street of Law; the Faubourg Saint Antoine was named the Faubourg of Glory; a statue of Nature stood in the Place de la Bastile. People pointed out to one another certain well-known personages—Chatelet, Didier, Nicholas and Garnier-Delaunay, who stood guard at the door of Duplay the joiner; Voullant, who never missed a guillotine-day, and followed the carts of the condemned—he called it going to "the red mass;" Montflabert, revolutionary juryman; and a marquis, who took the name of *Dix Août* (Tenth of August). People watched the pupils of the École Militaire file past, described by the decrees of the Convention as "aspirants in

the school of Mars," and by the crowd as "the pages of Robespierre." They read the proclamations of Fréron denouncing those suspected of the crime of "negotiantism." The dandies collected at the doors of the mayoralties to mock at the civil marriages, thronging about the brides and grooms as they passed, and shouting "Married *municipaliter!*" At the Invalides, the statues of the saints and kings were crowned with Phrygian caps. They played cards on the curb-stones at the crossings. The packs of cards were also in the full tide of revolution: the kings were replaced by genii; the queens by the goddess of Liberty; the knaves by figures representing Equality, and the aces by impersonations of Law. They tilled the public gardens; the plow worked at the Tuileries. With all these excesses was mingled, especially among the conquered parties, an indescribable haughty weariness of life. A man wrote to Fouquier-Tinville, "*Have the goodness to free me from existence. This is my address.*" Champcenetz was arrested for having cried in the midst of the Palais Royal garden: "When are we to have the revolution of Turkey? I want to see the republic *à la Porte*. Newspapers appeared in legions. The hairdressers' men curled the wigs of women in public, while the master read the *Moniteur* aloud. Others, surrounded by eager groups, commented with violent gestures upon the journal *Listen to Us* of Dubois Crancé, or the *Trumpet* of Father Bellerose. Sometimes the barbers were pork-sellers as well, and hams and chitterlings might be seen hanging side by side with a golden-haired doll. Dealers sold in the open street "wines of the refugees:" one merchant advertised wines of fifty-two sorts. Others displayed harp-shaped clocks and sofas "*à la duchesse.*" One hairdresser had for sign: "I shave the Clergy; I comb the Nobility; I arrange the Third Estate."

People went to have their fortunes told by Martin, at No. 173 in the Rue d'Anjou, formerly Rue Dauphine. There was a lack of bread, of coals, of soap. Herds of milch-cows might be seen coming in from the country. At the Vallée, lamb sold for fifteen francs the pound. An order of the Commune assigned a pound of meat per head every ten days. People stood in rank at the doors of the butchers' shops. One of these files has remained famous: it reached from a grocer's shop in the Rue du Petit Carreau to the middle of the Rue Montorgueil. To form a line was called "holding the cord," from a long rope which was held in the hands of those standing in the row. Amid this wretchedness, the women were brave and mild: they passed entire nights awaiting their turn to get into the bakers' shops. The Revolution resorted to expedients which were successful; she alleviated this widespread distress by two perilous means—the assignat and the maximum. The assignat was the lever, the maximum was the fulcrum. This empiri-

cism saved France. The enemy, whether of Coblentz or London, gambled in assignats. Girls came and went, offering lavender-water, garters, false hair, and selling stocks. There were jobbers on the Perron of the Rue Vivienne, with muddy shoes, greasy hair, and fur caps decorated with fox-tails; and there were swells from the Rue Valois, with varnished boots, toothpicks in their mouths, and long-napped hats on their heads, to whom the girls said "thee and thou." Later, the people gave chase to them as they did to the thieves, whom the royalists styled "active citizens." For the time, theft was rare. There reigned a terrible destitution and a stoical probity. The barefooted and

the starving passed with lowered eyelids before the jewelers' shops of the Palais Égalité. During a domiciliary visit that the Section Antoine made to the house of Beaumarchais, a woman picked a flower in the garden; the crowd boxed her ears. Wood cost four hundred francs in coin per cord; people could be seen in the streets sawing up their bedsteads. In the winter the fountains were frozen; two pails of water cost twenty sous: every man made himself a water-carrier. A gold louis was worth three thousand nine hundred and fifty francs. A course in a hackney-coach cost six hundred francs. After a day's use of a carriage, this sort of dialogue might be heard: "Coachman, how much do I owe you?" "Six thousand francs." A greengrocer woman sold twenty thousand francs' worth of vegetables a day. A beggar said, "Help me, in the name of charity! I lack two hundred and thirty francs to finish paying for my shoes." At the ends of the bridges might be seen colossal figures sculptured and painted by David, which

Mercier insulted. "*Enormous wooden Punches!*" said he. The gigantic shapes symbolized Federalism and Coalition overturned.

There was no faltering among this people. There was the sombre joy of having made an end of thrones. Volunteers abounded; each street furnished a battalion. The flags of the districts came and went, every one with its device. On the banner of the Capuchin district could be read, "*Nobody can cut our beards.*" On another, "*No other nobility than that of the heart.*" On all the walls were placards, large and small, white, yellow, green, red, printed and written, on which might be read this motto: "*Long live the Republic!*" The little children lisped "*Ça ira.*"

These children were in themselves the great future.

Later, to the tragical city succeeded the cynical city. The streets of Paris have offered two revolutionary aspects entirely distinct—that before and that after the 9th Thermidor. The Paris of Saint-Just gave place to the Paris of Tallien. Such antitheses are perpetual; after Sinai, the Courtille appeared.

An attack of public madness made its appearance. It had already been seen eighty years before. The people came out from under Louis XIV. as they did from under Robespierre, with a great need to breathe; hence the regency which opened that century and the directory which closed it. Two saturnalia after two terrorisms. France snatched the wicket-key and got beyond the Puritan cloister just as it did beyond that of monarchy, with the joy of a nation that escapes.

After the 9th Thermidor Paris was gay; but with an insane gayety. An unhealthy joy overflowed all bounds. To the frenzy for dying succeeded the frenzy for living, and grandeur eclipsed itself. They had a Trimalcion, calling himself Grimod de la Reynière: there was the "Almanac of the Gourmands." People dined in the entresols of the Palais Royal to the din of orchestras of women beating drums and blowing trumpets; the "rigadooner" reigned, bow in hand. People supped Oriental fashion at Méot's, surrounded by perfumes. The artist Boze painted his daughters, innocent and charming heads of sixteen, *en guillotinées;* that is to say, with bare necks and red shifts. To the wild dances in the ruined churches succeeded the balls of Ruggieri, of Luquet-Wenzel, Mauduit, and the Montansier; to grave citizenesses making lint succeeded sultanas, savages, nymphs; to the naked feet of the soldiers covered with blood, dust, and mud, succeeded the naked feet of women decorated with diamonds; at the same time, with shamelessness, improbity reappeared; and it had its purveyors in high ranks, and their imitators among the class below. A swarm of sharpers filled Paris, and every man was forced to guard well his "*luc*"—that is, his pocket-book.

J.J. ROUSSEAU
ENCYCLOPEDIE
CIMOURDAIN

One of the amusements of the day was to go to the Palace of Justice to see the female thieves; it was necessary to tie fast their petticoats. At the doors of the theatres the street boys opened cab doors, saying, "Citizen and citizeness, there is room for two." The *Old Cordelier* and the *Friend of the People* were no longer sold. In their place were cried *Punch's Letter* and the *Rogues' Petition.* The Marquis de Sade presided at the Section of the Pikes, Place Vendôme. The reaction was jovial and ferocious. The *Dragons of Liberty* of '92 were reborn under the name of the *Chevaliers of the Dagger.* At the same time there appeared in the booths that type, Jocrisse. There were "the *Merveilleuses,*" and in advance of these feminine marvels came "the *Incroyables.*" People swore by strange and affected oaths; they jumped back from Mirabeau to Bobêche. Thus it is that Paris sways back and forth; it is the enormous pendulum of civilization; it touches either pole in turn, Thermopylæ and Gomorrah. After '93 the Revolution traversed a singular occultation; the century seemed to forget to finish that which it had commenced; a strange orgy interposed itself, took the foreground, swept back to the second place the awful Apocalypse; veiled the immeasurable vision, and laughed aloud after its fright. Tragedy disappeared in parody, and, rising darkly from the bottom of the horizon, a smoke of carnival effaced Medusa.

But in '93, where we are, the streets of Paris still wore the grandiose and savage aspect of the beginning. They had their orators, such as Varlet, who promenaded in a booth on wheels, from the top of which he harangued the passers-by; they had their heroes, of whom one was called the "Captain of the iron-pointed sticks;" their favorites, among whom ranked Guffroy, the author of the pamphlet *Rougiff.* Certain of these popularities were mischievous, others had a healthy tone; one among them all was honest and fatal—it was that of Cimourdain.

CHAPTER II

CIMOURDAIN

CIMOURDAIN had a conscience pure but sombre. There was something of the absolute within him. He had been a priest, which is a grave matter. A man may, like the sky, possess a serenity which is dark and unfathomable; it only needs that something should have made night within his soul. The priesthood had made night in that of Cimourdain. He who has been a priest remains one.

What makes night within us may leave stars. Cimourdain was full of virtues and verities, but they shone among shadows.

His history is easily written. He had been a village curate and tutor in a great family; then he inherited a small legacy and gained his freedom.

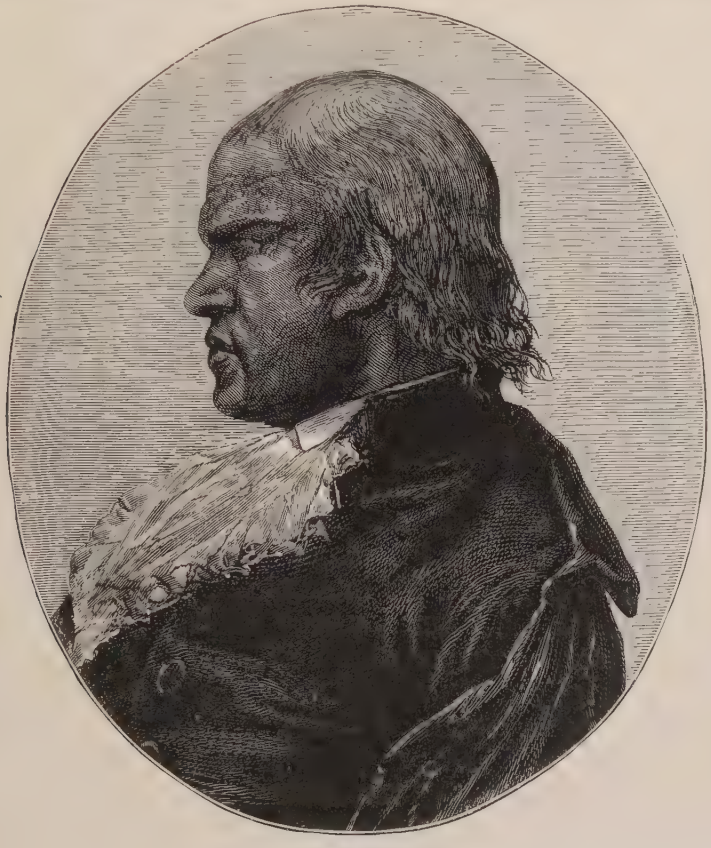
He was above all an obstinate man. He made use of meditation as one does of pincers; he did not think it right to quit an idea until he had followed it to the end; he thought stubbornly. He understood all the European languages, and something of others besides; this man studied incessantly, which aided him to bear the burden of celibacy; but nothing can be more dangerous than such a life of repression.

He had from pride, chance, or loftiness of soul been true to his vows, but he had not been able to guard his belief. Science had demolished faith; dogma had fainted within him. Then, as he examined himself, he felt that his soul was mutilated; he could not nullify his priestly oath, but tried to remake himself man, though in an austere fashion. His family had been taken from him; he adopted his country. A wife had been refused him; he espoused humanity. Such vast plenitude has a void at bottom.

His peasant parents, in devoting him to the priesthood, had desired to elevate him above the common people; he voluntarily returned among them.

He went back with a passionate energy. He regarded the suffering with a terrible tenderness. From priest he had become philosopher, and from philosopher, athlete. While Louis XV. still lived, Cimourdain felt himself vaguely republican. But belonging to what republic? To that of Plato perhaps, and perhaps also to the republic of Draco.

Forbidden to love, he set himself to hate. He hated lies, monarchy, theocracy, his garb of priest; he hated the present, and he called aloud



to the future; he had a presentiment of it, he caught glimpses of it in advance; he pictured it awful and magnificent. In his view, to end the lamentable wretchedness of humanity required at once an avenger and a liberator. He worshiped the catastrophe afar off.

In 1789 this catastrophe arrived and found him ready. Cimourdain flung himself into this vast plan of human regeneration on logical grounds—that is to say, for a mind of his mould, inexorably; logic knows no softening. He lived among the great revolutionary years, and felt the shock of their mighty breaths: '89, the fall of the Bastile, the end of the torture of the people; on the 4th of August, '90, the end

of feudalism; '91, Varennes, the end of royalty; '92, the birth of the Republic. He saw the Revolution loom into life; he was not a man to be afraid of that giant—far from it. This sudden growth in every thing had revivified him, and though already nearly old—he was fifty, and a priest ages faster than another man—he began himself to grow also. From year to year he saw events gain in grandeur, and he increased with them. He had at first feared that the Revolution would prove abortive; he watched it; it had reason and right on its side, he demanded success for it likewise; in proportion to the fear it caused the timid, his confidence strengthened. He desired that this Minerva, crowned with the stars of the future, should be Pallas also, with the Gorgon's head for buckler. He demanded that her divine glance should be able at need to fling back to the demons their infernal glare, and give them terror for terror.

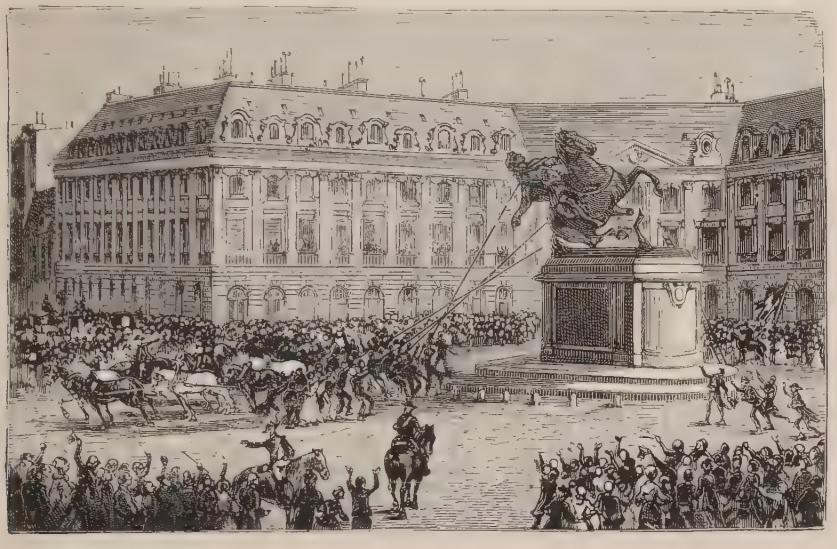
Thus he reached '93.

'93 was the war of Europe against France, and of France against Paris. And what was the Revolution? It was the victory of France over Europe, and of Paris over France. Hence the immensity of that terrible moment—'93—grander than all the rest of the century. Nothing could be more tragic: Europe attacking France and France attacking Paris! A drama which reaches the stature of an epic. '93 is a year of intensity. The tempest is there in all its wrath and all its grandeur. Cimourdain felt himself at home. This distracted centre, terrible and splendid, suited the span of his wings. Like the sea-eagle amid the tempest, this man preserved his internal composure and enjoyed the danger. Certain winged natures, savage yet calm, are made to battle the winds—souls of the tempest: such exist.

He had put pity aside, reserving it only for the wretched. He devoted himself to those sorts of suffering which cause horror. Nothing was repugnant to him. That was his kind of goodness. He was divine in his readiness to succor what was loathsome. He searched for ulcers in order that he might kiss them. Noble actions with a revolting exterior are the most difficult to undertake; he preferred such. One day at the Hôtel Dieu a man was dying, suffocated by a tumor in the throat—a fœtid, frightful abscess—contagious perhaps, which must be at once opened. Cimourdain was there; he put his lips to the tumor, sucked it, spitting it out as his mouth filled, and so emptied the abscess and saved the man. As he still wore his priest's dress at the time, some one said to him, "If you were to do that for the king, you would be made a bishop." "I would not do it for the king," Cimourdain replied. The act and the response rendered him popular in the sombre quarters of Paris.

They gave him so great a popularity that he could do what he liked with those who suffered, wept, and threatened. At the period of the public wrath against monopolists—a wrath which was prolific in mistakes—Cimourdain by a word prevented the pillage of a boat loaded with soap at the quay Saint Nicholas, and dispersed the furious bands who were stopping the carriages at the barrier of Saint Lazare.

It was he who, two days after the 10th of August, headed the people to overthrow the statues of the kings. They slaughtered as they fell: in the Place Vendôme, a woman called Reine Violet was crushed by the statue of Louis XIV., about whose neck she had put a cord, which she



was pulling. This statue of Louis XIV. had been standing a hundred years: it was erected the 12th of August, 1692; it was overthrown the 12th of August, 1792. In the Place de la Concorde, a certain Guinguerlot was butchered on the pedestal of Louis XV.'s statue for having called the demolishers scoundrels. The statue was broken in pieces. Later, it was melted to coin—into sous. The arm alone escaped—it was the right arm, which was extended with the gesture of a Roman emperor. At Cimourdain's request the people sent a deputation with this arm to Latude, the man who had been thirty-seven years buried in the Bastile. When Latude was rotting alive, the collar on his neck, the chain about his loins, in the bottom of that prison where he had been cast by the order of that king whose statue overlooked Paris, who could have prophesied to him that this prison would fall—this statue would be destroyed? that he would emerge from the sepulchre and monarchy enter it? that

he, the prisoner, would be the master of this hand of bronze which had signed his warrant; and that of this king of Mud there would remain only his brazen arm?

Cimourdain was one of those men who have an interior voice to which they listen. Such men seem absent-minded; no, they are attentive.

Cimourdain was at once learned and ignorant. He understood all science, and was ignorant of every thing in regard to life. Hence his severity. He had his eyes bandaged, like the Themis of Homer. He had the blind certainty of the arrow, which, seeing not the goal, yet goes straight to it. In a revolution there is nothing so formidable as a straight line. Cimourdain went straight before him, fatal, unwavering.

He believed that in a social Genesis the farthest point is the solid ground, an error peculiar to minds which replace reason by logic. He went beyond the Convention; he went beyond the Commune; he belonged to the Évêché.

The society called the Évêché, because its meetings were held in a hall of the former episcopal palace, was rather a complication of men than a union. There, as at the Commune, those silent but significant spectators were present who, as Garat said, "had as many pistols as pockets."

The Évêché was a strange mixture; a crowd at once cosmopolitan and Parisian. This is no contradiction, for Paris is the spot where beats the heart of the peoples. The great plebeian incandescence was at the Évêché. In comparison to it, the Convention was cold and the Commune lukewarm. The Évêché was one of those revolutionary formations similar to volcanic ones; it contained every thing—ignorance, stupidity, probity, heroism, choler, spies. Brunswick had agents there. It numbered men worthy of Sparta, and men who deserved the galleys. The greater part were mad and honest. The Gironde had pronounced by the mouth of Isnard, temporary president of the Convention, this monstrous warning:

"*Take care, Parisians! There will not remain one stone upon another of your city, and the day will come when the place where Paris stood shall be searched for.*"

This speech created the Évêché. Certain men—and, as we have just said, they were men of all nations—felt the need of gathering themselves close about Paris. Cimourdain joined this club.

The society reacted on the reactionists. It was born out of that public necessity for violence which is the formidable and mysterious side of revolutions. Strong with this strength, the Évêché at once began its work. In the commotions of Paris, it was the Commune that fired the cannon; it was the Évêché that sounded the tocsin.

In his implacable ingenuousness, Cimourdain believed that every thing in the service of truth is justice, which rendered him fit to dominate the extremists on either side. Scoundrels felt that he was honest, and were satisfied. Crime is flattered by having virtue to preside over it. It is at once troublesome and pleasant. Palloy, the architect who had turned to account the demolition of the Bastile, selling its stones to his own profit, and who, appointed to whitewash the cell of Louis XVI., in his zeal covered the wall with bars, chains, and iron rings; Gonchon, the suspected orator of the Faubourg Saint Antoine, whose quittances were afterward found; Fournier, the American, who on the 17th of July fired at Lafayette a pistol-shot, paid for, it is said, by Lafayette himself; Henriot, who had come out of Bicêtre, and who had been valet, mountebank, robber, and spy, before being a general and turning the guns on the Convention; La Reynie, formerly grand-vicar of Chartres, who had replaced his breviary by *The Père Duchesne*—all these men were held in respect by Cimourdain, and at certain moments, to keep the worst of them from stumbling, it was sufficient to feel his redoubtable and believing candor as a judgment before them. It was thus that Saint Just terrified Schneider. At the same time the majority of the Évêché, composed principally as it was of poor and violent men who were honest, believed in Cimourdain and followed him. He had for curate or aid-de-camp, as you please, that other republican priest, Danjou, whom the people loved on account of his height, and had christened Abbé Six-Foot. Cimourdain could have led where he would that intrepid chief called *General La Pique*, and that bold Truchon named the Great Nicholas, who had tried to save Madame de Lamballe, and had given her his arm, and made her spring over the corpses; an attempt which would have succeeded, had it not been for the ferocious pleasantry of the barber Charlot.

The Commune watched the Convention; the Évêché watched the Commune. Cimourdain, naturally upright and detesting intrigue, had broken more than one mysterious thread in the hand of Pache, whom Beurnonville called "the black man." Cimourdain at the Évêché was on confidential terms with all. He was consulted by Dobsent and Momoro. He spoke Spanish with Gusman, Italian with Pio, English with Arthur, Flemish with Pereyra, German with the Austrian Proly, the bastard of a prince. He created a harmony between these discordances. Hence his position was obscure and strong. Hébert feared him.

In these times and among these tragic groups, Cimourdain possessed the power of the inexorable. He was an impeccable, who believed himself infallible. No person had ever seen him weep. He

was Virtue inaccessible and glacial. He was the terrible offspring of Justice.

There is no half-way possible to a priest in a revolution. A priest can only give himself up to this wild and prodigious chance either from the highest or the lowest motive; he must be infamous or he must be sublime. Cimourdain was sublime, but in isolation, in rugged inaccessibility, in inhospitable secretiveness; sublime amid a circle of precipices. Lofty mountains possess this sinister freshness.

Cimourdain had the appearance of an ordinary man; dressed in every-day garments, poor in aspect. When young, he had been tonsured; as an old man he was bald. What little hair he had left was gray. His forehead was broad, and to the acute observer it revealed his character. Cimourdain had an abrupt way of speaking, which was passionate and solemn; his voice was quick, his accent peremptory; his mouth bitter and sad; his eye clear and profound; and over his whole countenance an indescribable indignant expression.

Such was Cimourdain.

No one to-day knows his name. History has many of these great Unknown.

CHAPTER III

A CORNER NOT DIPPED IN STYX

WAS such a man indeed a man? Could the servant of the human race know fondness? Was he not too entirely a soul to possess a heart? This widespread embrace, which included every thing and everybody, could it narrow itself down to one? Could Cimourdain love? We answer—Yes.

When young, and tutor in an almost princely family, he had had a pupil whom he loved—the son and heir of the house. It is so easy to love a child. What can one not pardon a child? One forgives him for being a lord, a prince, a king. The innocence of his age makes one forget the crime of race; the feebleness of the creature causes one to overlook the exaggeration of rank. He is so little that one forgives him for being great. The slave forgives him for being his master. The old negro idolizes the white nursling. Cimourdain had conceived a passion for his pupil. Childhood is so ineffable that one may unite all affections upon it. Cimourdain's whole power of loving prostrated itself, so to speak, before this boy; that sweet, innocent being became a sort of prey for that heart condemned to solitude. He loved with a mingling of all tendernesses: as father, as brother, as friend, as maker. The child was his son, not of his flesh, but of his mind. He was not the father, and this was not his work; but he was the master, and this his masterpiece. Of this little lord he had made a man. Who knows? Perhaps a great man. Such are dreams. Has one need of the permission of a family to create an intelligence, a will, an upright chraracter? He had communicated to the young viscount, his scholar, all the advanced ideas which he held himself; he had inoculated him with the redoubtable virus of his virtue; he had infused into his veins his own convictions, his own conscience

and ideal; into this brain of an aristocrat he had poured the soul of the people.

The spirit suckles; the intelligence is a breast. There is an analogy between the nurse who gives her milk and the preceptor who gives his thought. Sometimes the tutor is more father than is the father, just as often the nurse is more mother than the mother.

This deep spiritual paternity bound Cimourdain to his pupil. The very sight of the child softened him.

Let us add this: to replace the father was easy; the boy no longer had one. He was an orphan; his father and mother were both dead. To keep watch over him he had only a blind grandmother and an absent great-uncle. The grandmother died; the great-uncle, head of the family, a soldier and a man of high rank, provided with appointments at court, avoided the old family dungeon, lived at Versailles, went forth with the army, and left the orphan alone in the solitary castle. So the preceptor was master in every sense of the word.

Let us add still further: Cimourdain had seen the child born. The boy, while very little, was seized with a severe illness. In this peril of death, Cimourdain watched day and night. It is the physician who prescribes, it is the nurse who saves, and Cimourdain saved the child. Not only did his pupil owe to him education, instruction, science, but he owed him also convalescence and health; not only did his pupil owe him the development of his mind, he owed him life itself. We worship those who owe us all; Cimourdain adored this child.

The natural separation came about at length. The education completed, Cimourdain was obliged to quit the boy, grown to a young man. With what cold and unconscionable cruelty these separations are insisted upon! How tranquilly families dismiss the preceptor, who leaves his spirit in a child, and the nurse, who leaves her heart's blood!

Cimourdain, paid and put aside, went out of the grand world and returned to the sphere below. The partition between the great and the little closed again; the young lord, an officer of birth, and made captain at the outset, departed for some garrison; the humble tutor (already at the bottom of his heart an unsubmissive priest) hastened to go down again into that obscure ground-floor of the Church occupied by the under clergy, and Cimourdain lost sight of his pupil.

The Revolution came on; the recollection of that being whom he had made a man brooded within him, hidden but not extinguished by the immensity of public affairs.

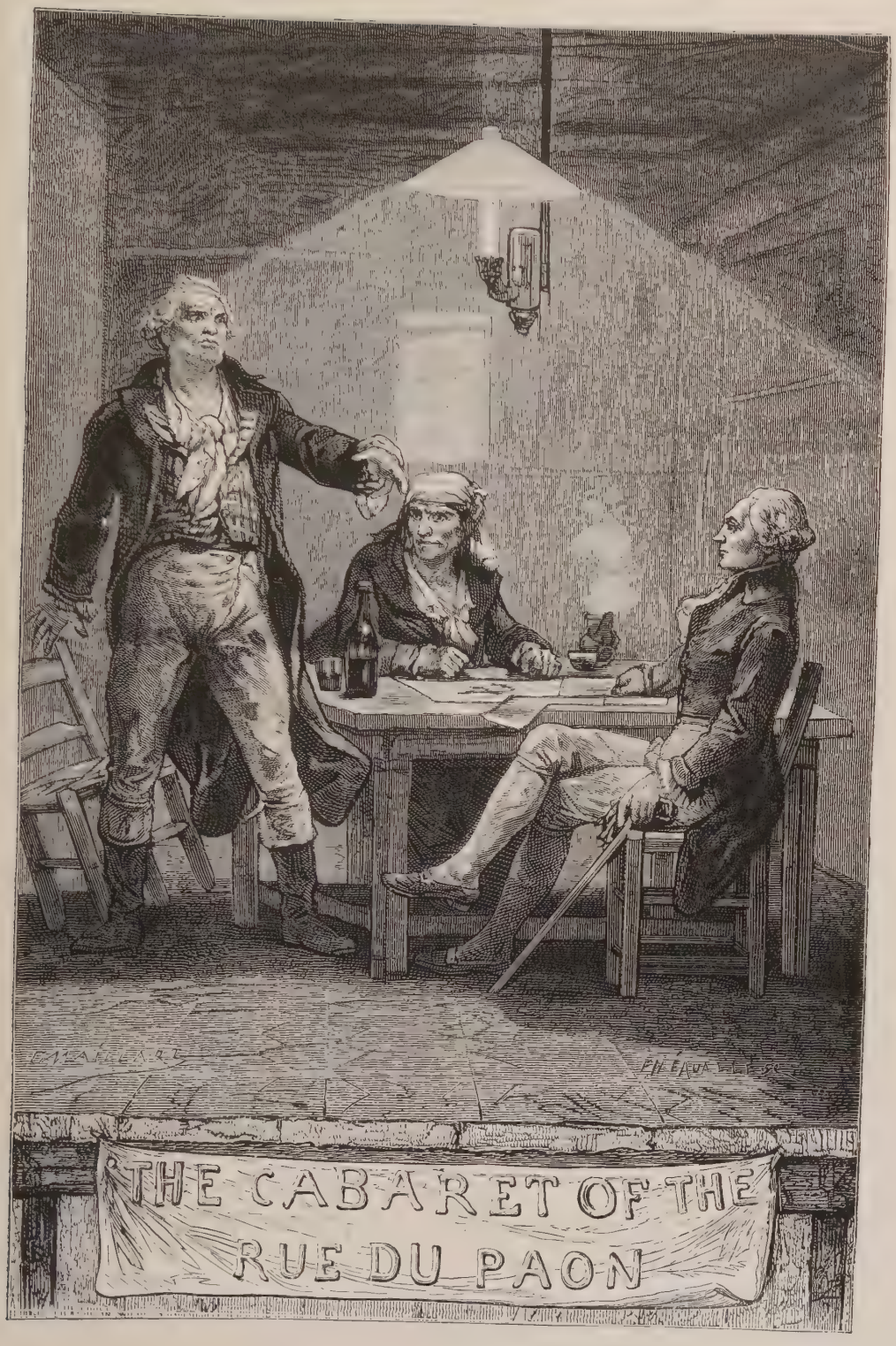
It is a beautiful thing to model a statue and give it life; to mould an intelligence and instill truth therein is still more beautiful. Cimourdain was the Pygmalion of a soul.

The spirit may own a child.

This pupil, this boy, this orphan, was the sole being on earth whom he loved.

But even in such an affection would a man like this prove vulnerable?

We shall see.


THE CABARET OF THE
RUE DU PAON

BOOK II

THE PUBLIC-HOUSE OF THE RUE DU PAON

CHAPTER I

MINOS, ÆACUS, AND RHADAMANTHUS

THERE was a public-house in the Rue du Paon which was called a café. This café had a back room, which is to-day historical. It was there that often, almost secretly, met certain men, so powerful and so constantly watched that they hesitated to speak with one another in public.

It was there that on the 23d of October, 1792, the Mountain and the Gironde exchanged their famous kiss. It was there that Garat, although he does not admit it in his Memoirs, came for information on that lugubrious night when, after having put Clavière in safety in the Rue de Beaune, he stopped his carriage on the Pont Royal to listen to the tocsin.

On the 28th of June, 1793, three men were seated about a table in this back chamber. Their chairs did not touch; they were placed one on either of the three sides of the table, leaving the fourth vacant. It was about eight o'clock in the evening; it was still light in the street, but dark in the back room, and a lamp, hung from a hook in the ceiling —a luxury there—lighted the table.

The first of these three men was pale, young, grave, with thin lips

and a cold glance. He had a nervous movement in his cheek, which must have made it difficult for him to smile. He wore his hair powdered; he was gloved; his light-blue coat, well brushed, was without a wrinkle, carefully buttoned. He wore nankeen breeches, white stockings, a high cravat, a plaited shirt-frill, and shoes with silver buckles.

Of the other two men, one was a species of giant, the other a sort of

dwarf. The tall one was untidily dressed in a coat of scarlet cloth, his neck bare, his unknotted cravat falling down over his shirt-frill, his vest gaping from lack of buttons. He wore top-boots; his hair stood stiffly up and was disarranged, though it still showed traces of powder; his very peruke was like a mane. His face was marked with small-pox; there was a choleric line between his brows; a wrinkle that signified kindness at the corner of his mouth; his lips were thick, the teeth large; he had the fist of a porter and eyes that blazed. The little one was a yellow man, who looked deformed when seated. He carried his head

thrown back, the eyes were injected with blood, there were livid blotches on his face; he had a handkerchief knotted about his greasy, straight hair; he had no forehead; the mouth was enormous and horrible. He wore pantaloons instead of knee-breeches, slippers, a waistcoat which seemed originally to have been of white satin, and over this a loose jacket, under whose folds a hard, straight line showed that a poniard was hidden.

The first of these men was named Robespierre; the second, Danton; the third, Marat.

MARAT.

They were alone in the room. Before Danton was set a glass and a dusty wine-bottle, reminding one of Luther's pint of beer; before Marat a cup of coffee; before Robespierre only papers.

Near the papers stood one of those heavy, round, ridged, leaden inkstands which will be remembered by men who were school-boys at the beginning of this century. A pen was thrown carelessly by the side of the inkstand. On the papers lay a great brass seal, on which could be read *Palloy fecit*, and which was a perfect miniature model of the Bastile.

A map of France was spread in the middle of the table. Outside

the door was stationed Marat's "watch-dog," a certain Laurent Basse, porter of No. 18 Rue des Cordeliers, who, some fifteen days after this 28th of June, say the 13th of July, was to deal a blow with a chair on the head of a woman named Charlotte Corday, at this moment vaguely dreaming in Caen. Laurent Basse was the proof-carrier of the *Friend of the People*. Brought this evening by his master to the café of the Rue du Paon, he had been ordered to keep the room closed where Marat, Danton, and Robespierre were seated, and to allow no person to enter unless it might be some member of the Committee of Public Safety, the Commune, or the Évêché.

Robespierre did not wish to shut the door against Saint-Just; Danton did not want it closed against Pache; Marat would not shut it against Gusman.

The conference had already lasted a long time. It was in reference to papers spread on the table, which Robespierre had read. The voices began to grow louder. Symptoms of anger arose between these three men. From without eager words could be caught at moments. At that period the example of the public tribunals seemed to have created the right to listen at doors. It was the time when the copying-clerk Fabricius Pâris looked through the keyhole at the proceedings of the Committee of Public Safety; a feat which, be it said by the way, was not without its use, for it was this Pâris who warned Danton on the night before the 31st of March, 1794. Laurent Basse had his ear to the door of the back room where Danton, Marat, and Robespierre were. Laurent Basse served Marat, but he belonged to the Évêché.

CHAPTER II

MAGNA TESTANTUR VOCE PER UMBRAS

DANTON had just risen and pushed his chair hastily back.

"Listen!" he cried. There is only one thing imminent —the peril of the Republic. I only know one thing—to deliver France from the enemy. To accomplish that all means are fair. All! All! All! When I have to deal with a combination of dangers, I have recourse to every or any expedient; when I fear all, I have all. My thought is a lioness. No half-measures. No squeamishness in resolution. Nemesis is not a conceited prude. Let us be terrible and useful. Does the elephant stop to look where he sets his foot? We must crush the enemy."

Robespierre replied mildly:

"I shall be very glad."

And he added:

"The question is to know where the enemy is."

"It is outside, and I have chased it there," said Danton.

"It is within, and I watch it," said Robespierre.

"And I will continue to pursue it," resumed Danton.

"One does not drive away an internal enemy."

"What, then, do you do?"

"Exterminate it."

"I agree to that," said Danton in his turn.

Then he continued:

"I tell you, Robespierre, it is without."

"Danton, I tell you it is within."

"Robespierre, it is on the frontier."

"Danton, it is in Vendée."

"Calm yourselves," said a third voice. "It is everywhere, and you are lost."

It was Marat who spoke.

Robespierre looked at him and answered tranquilly: "Truce to generalities. I particularize. Here are facts."

"Pedant!" grumbled Marat.

Robespierre laid his hand on the papers spread before him and continued:

"I have just read you the dispatches from Prieur of the Marne. I have just communicated to you the information given by that Gélambre. Danton, listen! The foreign war is nothing; the civil war is all. The foreign war is a scratch that one gets on the elbow; civil war is the ulcer which eats up the liver. This is the result of what I have been reading: the Vendée, up to this day divided between several chiefs, is concentrating herself. Henceforth she will have one sole captain——"

"A central brigand," murmured Danton.

"Who is," pursued Robespierre, "the man that landed near Pontorson on the 2d of June. You have seen who he was. Remember this landing coincides with the arrest of the acting representatives, Prieur of the Côte-d'Or and Romme at Bayeux, by the traitorous district of Calvados, the 2d of June—the same day."

"And their transfer to the castle of Caen," said Danton.

Robespierre resumed:

"I continue my summing up of the dispatches. The war of the Woods is organizing on a vast scale. At the same time, an English invasion is preparing; Vendeans and English—it is Briton with Breton. The Hurons of Finistère speak the same language as the Topinambes of Cornwall. I have shown you an intercepted letter from Puisaye, in which it is said that 'twenty thousand red-coats distributed among the insurgents will be the means of raising a hundred thousand more.' When the peasant insurrection is prepared, the English descent will be made. Look at the plan—follow it on the map."

Robespierre put his finger on the chart and went on:

"The English have the choice of landing-place from Cancale to Paimbol. Craig would prefer the Bay of Saint-Brieuc; Cornwallis, the Bay of Saint-Cast. That is mere detail. The left bank of the Loire is guarded by the rebel Vendean army, and as to the twenty-eight leagues of open country between Ancenis and Pontorson, forty Norman parishes have promised their aid. The descent will be made at three points—Plérin, Iffiniac, and Pléneuf. From Plérin they can go to Saint-Brieuc, and from Pléneuf to Lamballe. The second day they will reach Dinan, where there are nine hundred English prisoners, and at the same time they will occupy Saint-Jouan and Saint-Méen; they will leave cavalry there. On the third day, two columns will march, the one from Jouan

on Bedée, the other from Dinan on Becheral, which is a natural fortress, and where they will establish two batteries. The fourth day they will reach Rennes. Rennes is the key of Brittany. Whoever has Rennes has the whole. Rennes captured, Châteauneuf and Saint-Malo will fall. There are at Rennes a million of cartridges and fifty artillery field-pieces——"

"Which they will sweep off," murmured Danton.

Robespierre continued:

"I conclude. From Rennes three columns will fall, the one on Fougères, the other on Vitré, the third on Redon. As the bridges are cut, the enemy will furnish themselves—you have seen this fact particularly stated—with pontoons and planks, and they will have guides for the points fordable by the cavalry. From Fougères they will radiate to Avranches; from Redon to Ancenis; from Vitré to Laval. Nantes will capitulate. Brest will yield. Redon opens the whole extent of the Vilaine; Fougères gives them the route of Normandy; Vitré opens the route to Paris. In fifteen days they will have an army of brigands numbering three hundred thousand men, and all Brittany will belong to the King of France."

"That is to say, to the King of England," said Danton.

"No, to the King of France."

And Robespierre added:

The King of France is worse. It needs fifteen days to expel the stranger, and eighteen hundred years to eliminate monarchy."

Danton, who had reseated himself, leaned his elbows on the table, and rested his head in his hands in a thoughtful attitude.

"You see the peril," said Robespierre. "Vitré lays open to the English the road to Paris."

Danton raised his head and struck his two great clenched hands on the map as on an anvil.

"Robespierre, did not Verdun open the route to Paris to the Prussians?"

"Very well!"

"Very well, we will expel the English as we expelled the Prussians." And Danton rose again.

Robespierre laid his cold hand on the feverish fist of the other.

"Danton, Champagne was not for the Prussians, and Brittany is for the English. To retake Verdun was a foreign war; to retake Vitré will be civil war."

And Robespierre murmured in a chill, deep tone:

"A serious difference."

He added aloud:

"Sit down again, Danton, and look at the map instead of knocking it with your fist."

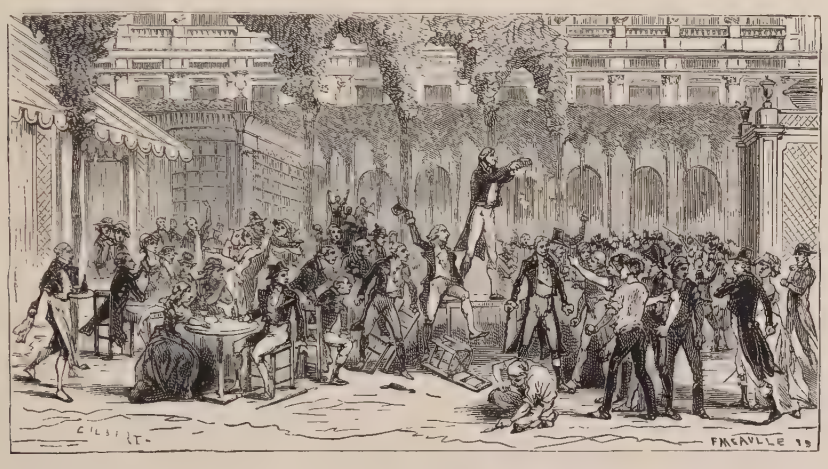
But Danton was wholly given up to his own idea.

"That is madness!" cried he. "To look for the catastrophe in the west when it is in the east. Robespierre, I grant you that England is rising on the ocean; but Spain is rising among the Pyrenees; but Italy is rising among the Alps; but Germany is rising on the Rhine. And the great Russian bear is at the bottom. Robespierre, the danger is a circle, and we are within it. On the exterior, coalition; in the interior, treason. In the south, Servant half opens the door of France to the King of Spain. At the north, Dumouriez passes over to the enemy. For that matter, he always menaced Holland less than Paris. Neerwinden blots out Jemmapes and Valmy. The philosopher Rabaut Saint-Étienne, a traitor like the Protestant he is, corresponds with the courtier Montesquiou. The army is destroyed. There is not a battalion that has more than four hundred men remaining; the brave regiment of Deux-Ponts is reduced to a hundred and fifty men; the camp of Pamars has capitulated; there are only five hundred sacks of flour left at Givet; we are falling back on Landau; Wurmser presses Kleber; Mayence succumbs bravely; Condé, cowardly. Valenciennes also. But all that does not prevent Chancel, who defends Valenciennes, and old Féraud, who defends Condé, being heroes, as well as Meunier, who defended Mayence. But all the rest are betraying us. Dharville betrays us at Aix-la-Chapelle; Mouton at Brussels; Valence at Bréda; Neuilly at Limbourg; Miranda at Maestricht; Stingel, traitor; Lanoue, traitor; Ligonnier, traitor; Menou, traitor; Dillon, traitor—hideous coin of Dumouriez. We must make examples. Custine's countermarches look suspicious to me: I suspect Custine of preferring the lucrative prize of Frankfort to the useful capture of Coblentz. Frankfort can pay four millions of war tribute; so be it. What would that be in comparison with crushing that nest of refugees? Treason, I say. Meunier died on the 13th of June. Kleber is alone. In the meantime, Brunswick strengthens and advances. He plants the German flag on every French place that he takes. The Margrave of Brandenburg is to-day the arbiter of Europe; he pockets our provinces; he will adjudge Belgium to himself—you will see. One would say that we were working for Berlin. If this continue, and we do not put things in order, the French Revolution will have been for the benefit of Potsdam; it will have accomplished for unique result the aggrandizement of the little state of Frederick II., and we shall have killed the King of France for the King of Prussia's sake.

And Danton burst into a terrible laugh.

Danton's laugh made Marat smile.

"You have each one your hobby," said he. "Danton, yours is Prussia; Robespierre, yours is the Vendée. I am going to state facts in my turn. You do not perceive the real peril: it is this—the cafés and the gaming-houses. The Café Choiseul is Jacobin; the Café Pitou is Royalist; the Café Rendez-Vous attacks the National Guard; the Café of the Porte Saint-Martin defends it; the Café Régence is against Brissot; the Café Corazza is for him; the Café Procope swears by Diderot; the Café of the Théâtre Français swears by Voltaire; at the Rotunde they tear up the assignats; the Cafés Saint-Marceau are in a fury; the Café Manouri debates the question of flour; at the Café Foy uproars and fisticuffs; at the Perron the hornets of the finance buzz. These are the matters which are serious."



Danton laughed no longer. Marat continued to smile. The smile of a dwarf is worse than the laugh of a giant.

"Do you sneer at yourself, Marat?" growled Danton.

Marat gave that convulsive movement of his hip which was celebrated. His smile died.

"Ah, I recognize you, Citizen Danton! It is indeed you who in full Convention called me 'the individual Marat.' Listen; I forgive you. We are playing the fool! Ah! *I* mock at myself! See what I have done. I denounced Chazot; I denounced Pétion; I denounced Kersaint; I denounced Moreton; I denounced Dufriche-Valazé; I denounced Ligonnier; I denounced Menou; I denounced Banneville; I denounced Gensonné; I denounced Biron; I denounced Lidon and Chambon. Was I mistaken? I smell treason in the traitor, and I find it best to denounce the criminal before he can commit his crime. I have the habit of saying

in the evening that which you and others say on the following day. I I am the man who proposed to the Assembly a perfect plan of criminal legislation. What have I done up to the present? I have asked for the instruction of the sections in order to discipline them for the Revolution; I have broken the seals of thirty-two boxes; I have reclaimed the diamonds deposited in the hands of Roland; I proved that the Brissotins gave to the Committee of the General Safety blank warrants; I noted the omissions in the report of Lindet upon the crimes of Capet; I voted the punishment of the tyrant in twenty-four hours; I defended the battalions of Mauconseil and the Républicain; I prevented the reading of the letter of Narbonne and of Malonet; I made a motion in favor of the wounded soldiers; I caused the suppression of the Commission of Six; I foresaw the treason of Dumouriez in the affair of Mons; I demanded the taking of a hundred thousand relatives of the refugees as hostages

for the commissioners delivered to the enemy; I proposed to declare traitor any representative who should pass the barriers; I unmasked the Roland faction in the troubles at Marseilles; I insisted that a price should be set on the head of Égalité's son; I defended Bouchotte; I called for a nominal appeal in order to chase Isnard from the chair; I caused it to be declared that the Parisians had deserved well of the country. That is why I am called a dancing-puppet by Louvet; that is why Finisterre demands my expulsion; why the city of Loudun desires that I should be exiled, the city of Amiens that I should be muzzled; why Coburg wishes me to be arrested, and Lecointe Puiraveau proposes to the Convention to decree me mad. Ah there! Citizen Danton, why did you ask me to come to your little council if it were not to have my opinion? Did I ask to belong to it? Far from that. I have no taste for dialogues with counter-revolutionists like Robespierre and you. For that matter, I ought to have known that you would not understand me; you no more than Robespierre—Robespierre no more than you. So there is not a statesman here? You need to be taught to spell at politics; you must have the dot put over the i for you. What I said to you meant this: you both deceive yourselves. The danger is not

in London, as Robespierre believes; nor in Berlin, as Danton believes: it is in Paris. It consists in the absence of unity; in the right of each one to pull on his own side, commencing with you two; in the blinding of minds; in the anarchy of wills——"

"Anarchy!" interrupted Danton. "Who causes that, if not you?"

Marat did not pause.

"Robespierre, Danton, the danger is in this heap of cafés, in this mass of gaming-houses, this crowd of clubs—Clubs of the Blacks, the Federals, the Women—the Club of the Impartials, which dates from Clermont-Tonnerre, and which was the Monarchical Club of 1790, a social circle conceived by the priest Claude Fauché; Club of the Woolen

Caps, founded by the gazetteer Prudhomme, *et cætera;* without counting your Club of the Jacobins, Robespierre, and your Club of the Cordeliers, Danton. The danger lies in the famine which caused the sack-porter Blin to hang up to the lamp of the Hôtel de Ville the baker of the Market Palu, François Denis, and in the justice which hung the sack-porter Blin for having hanged the baker Denis. The danger is in the paper money, which the people depreciate. In the Rue du Temple an assignat of a hundred francs fell to the ground, and a passer-by, a man of the people, said, '*It is not worth the pains of picking it up.*' The stock-brokers and the monopolists—there is the danger. To have nailed the black flag to the Hôtel de Ville—a fine advance! You arrest Baron Trenck; that is not sufficient. I want this old prison intriguer's neck wrung. You believe that you have got out of the difficulty because the President of the Convention puts a civic crown on the head of Labertèche, who received forty-one sabre cuts at Jemmapes, and of whom

Chénier makes himself the elephant driver? Comedies and juggling! Ah, you will not look at Paris! You seek the danger at a distance when it is close at hand. What is the use of your police, Robespierre? For you have your spies—Payan at the Commune—Coffinhal at the Revolutionary Tribunal—David at the Committee of General Security—Couthon at the Committee of Public Safety. You see that I know all about it. Very well, learn this: the danger is over your heads; the danger is under your feet; conspiracies—conspiracies—conspiracies!

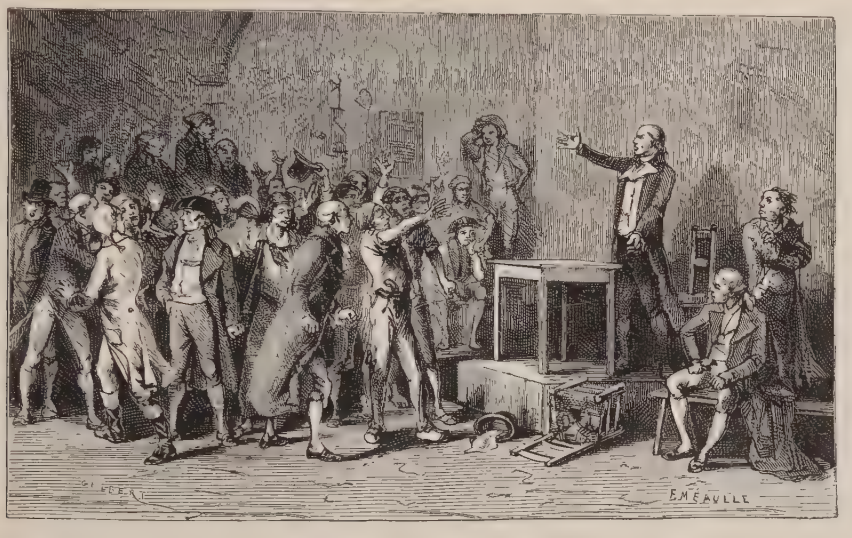
The people in the streets read the newspapers to one another and exchange nods; six thousand men, without civic papers, returned emigrants, Muscadins and Mathevons, are hidden in cellars and garrets and the wooden galleries of the Palais Royal. People stand in a row at the bakers' shops; the women stand in the doorways and clasp their hands, crying, 'When shall we have peace?' You may shut yourselves up as close as you please in the hall of the Executive Council, in order to be alone; every word you speak is known, and as a proof, Robespierre, here are the words you spoke last night to Saint-Just—'Barbaroux begins to show a fat paunch; it will be a trouble to him in his

flight.' Yes; the danger is everywhere, and above all in the centre. In Paris the 'Retrogrades' plot, while patrols go barefooted; the aristocrats arrested on the 9th of March are already set at liberty; the fancy horses which ought to be harnessed to the frontier-cannon spatter mud on us in the streets; a loaf of breaf weighing four pounds costs three francs twelve sous; the theatres play indecent pieces, and Robespierre will presently have Danton guillotined."

"Oh, there, there!" said Danton.

Robespierre attentively studied the map.

"What is needed," cried Marat abruptly, "is a dictator. Robespierre, you know that I want a dictator."



Robespierre raised his head.

"I know, Marat; you or me."

"Me or you," said Marat.

Danton grumbled between his teeth:

"The dictatorship; only try it!"

Marat caught Danton's frown.

"Hold!" he began again: "One last effort. Let us get some agreement. The situation is worth the trouble. Did we not come to an agreement for the day of the 31st of May? The entire question is a more serious one than that of Girondism, which was a question of detail. There is truth in what you say; but *the* truth, the whole truth, the real truth, is what I say. In the south, Federalism; in the west, Royalism; in Paris, the duel of the Convention and the Commune; on the frontiers, the retreat of Custine and the treason of Dumouriez.

What does all this signify? Dismemberment. What is necessary to us? Unity. There is safety; but we must hasten to reach it. Paris must assume the government of the Revolution. If we lose an hour, to-morrow the Vendeans may be at Orleans, and the Prussians in Paris. I grant you this, Danton; I accord you that, Robespierre. So be it. Well, the conclusion is—a dictatorship. Let us seize the dictatorship—we three who represent the Revolution. We are the three heads of Cerberus. Of these three heads, one talks—that is you, Robespierre; one roars—that is you, Danton."

"The other bites," said Danton; "that is you, Marat."

"All three bite," said Robespierre.

There was a silence. Then the dialogue, full of dark threats, recommenced.

"Listen, Marat; before entering into a marriage, people must know each other. How did you learn what I said yesterday to Saint-Just?"

"That is my affair, Robespierre."

"Marat!"

"It is my duty to enlighten myself, and my business to inform myself."

"Marat!"

"I like to know things."

"Marat!"

"Robespierre, I know what you say to Saint-Just, as I know what Danton says to Lacroix; as I know what passes on the Quay of the Theatins, at the Hôtel Labriffe, the den where the nymphs of the emi-

THE ROYAL FAMILY IN THE TEMPLE.

gration meet; as I know what happens in the house of the Thilles, near Gonesse, which belongs to Valmerange, former administrator of the post where Maury and Cazales went; where, since then, Sieyès and Vergniaud went, and where now some one goes once a week."

In saying "some one," Marat looked significantly at Danton.

Danton cried:

"If I had two farthings' worth of power, this would be terrible."

Marat continued:

"I know what I am saying to you, Robespierre, just as I knew what was going on in the Temple tower when they fattened Louis XVI. there, so well that the he-wolf, the she-wolf, and the cubs ate up eighty-

six baskets of peaches in the month of September alone. During that time the people were starving. I know that, as I know that Roland was hidden in a lodging looking on a back court, in the Rue de la Harpe; as I know that 600 of the pikes of July 14th were manufactured by Faure, the Duke of Orleans' locksmith; as I know what they do in the house of the Saint-Hilaire, the mistress of Sillery; on the days when there is to be a ball, it is old Sillery himself who chalks the floor of the yellow saloon of the Rue Neuve des Mathurins; Buzot and Kersaint dined there. Saladin dined there on the 27th, and with whom, Robespierre? With your friend Lasource."

"Mere words," muttered Robespierre. "Lasource is not my friend."

And he added, thoughtfully:

"In the meanwhile there are in London eighteen manufactories of false assignats."

Marat went on in a voice still tranquil, though it had a slight tremulousness that was threatening:

"You are the faction of the All-Importants! Yes; I know every thing, in spite of what Saint-Just calls 'the silence of State——'"

Marat emphasized these last words, looked at Robespierre, and continued:

"I know what is said at your table the days when Lebas invites David to come and eat the dinner cooked by his betrothed, Elizabeth Duplay—your future sister-in-law, Robespierre. I am the far-seeing eye of the people, and from the bottom of my cave I watch. Yes, I see; yes, I hear; yes, I know! Little things content you. You admire yourselves. Robespierre poses to be contemplated by his Madame de Chalabre, the daughter of that Marquis de Chalabre who played whist with Louis XV. the evening Damiens was executed. Yes, yes; heads are carried high. Saint-Just lives in a cravat. Legendre's dress is scrupulously correct; new frock-coat and white waistcoat, and a shirt-frill to make people forget his apron. Robespierre imagines that history will be interested to know that he wore an olive-colored frock-coat *à la Constituante*, and a sky-blue dress-coat *à la Convention*. He has his portrait hanging on all the walls of his chamber——"

Robespierre interrupted him in a voice even more composed than Marat's own:

"And you, Marat, have yours in all the sewers."

They continued this style of conversation, in which the slowness of their voices emphasized the violence of the attacks and retorts, and added a certain irony to menace.

"Robespierre, you have called those who desire the overthrow of thrones '*the Don Quixotes of the human race*.'"

"And you, Marat, after the 4th of August, in No. 559 of the *Friend of the People* (ah, I have remembered the number; it may be useful!), you demanded that the titles of the nobility should be restored to them. You said: '*A duke is always a duke*.'"

"Robespierre, in the sitting of December 7th, you defended the woman Roland against Viard."

"Just as my brother defended you, Marat, when you were attacked at the Jacobin Club. What does that prove? Nothing!"

"Robespierre, we know the cabinet of the Tuileries where you said to Garat: '*I am tired of the Revolution!*'"

"Marat, it was here, in this public-house, that, on the 29th of October, you embraced Barbaroux."

"Robespierre, you said to Buzot: '*The Republic! what is that?*'"

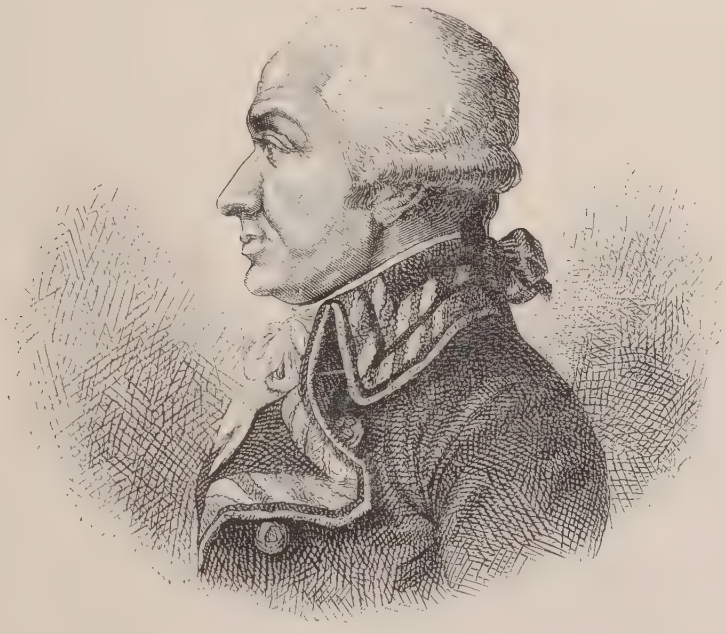
"Marat, it was also in this public-house that you invited three Marseillais suspects to keep you company."

"Robespierre, you have yourself escorted by a stout fellow from the market, armed with a club."

"And you, Marat—on the eve of the 10th of August, you asked Buzot to help you flee to Marseilles disguised as a jockey."

"During the prosecutions of September you hid yourself, Robespierre."

"And you, Marat—you showed yourself."



DUMOURIEZ.

"Robespierre, you flung the red cap on the ground."

"Yes, when a traitor hoisted it. That which decorates Dumouriez sullies Robespierre."

"Robespierre, you refused to cover Louis XVI.'s head with a veil while soldiers of Chateauvieux were passing."

"I did better than veil his head: I cut it off."

Danton interposed, but it was like oil flung upon flames.

"Robespierre, Marat," said he; "calm yourselves."

Marat did not like being named the second. He turned about.

"With what does Danton meddle?" he asked.

Danton bounded.

"With what do I meddle? With this! That we must not have

fratricide; that there must be no strife between two men who serve the people; that it is enough to have a foreign war; that it is enough to have a civil war; that it would be too much to have a domestic war; that it is I who have made the Revolution, and I will not permit it to be spoiled. Now you know what it is I meddle with!"

Marat replied, without raising his voice:

"You had better meddle with getting your accounts ready."

"My accounts!" cried Danton. "Go ask for them in the defiles of Argonne—in Champagne delivered—in Belgium conquered—in the armies where I have already four times offered my breast to the musket-shots. Go demand them at the Place de la Revolution, at the scaffold of January 21st, from the throne flung to the ground, from the guillotine; that widow——"

Marat interrupted him:

"The guillotine is a virgin Amazon; she does not give birth."

"Are you sure?" retorted Danton. "I tell you I will make her fruitful."

"We shall see," said Marat. He smiled.

Danton saw this smile.

"Marat," cried he, "you are the man that hides; I am the man of the open air and broad day. I hate the life of a reptile. It would not suit me to be a wood-louse. You inhabit a cave; I live in the street. You hold communication with none; whosoever passes may see and speak with me."

"Pretty fellow! will you mount up to where I live?" snarled Marat.

Then his smile disappeared, and he continued, in a peremptory tone:

"Danton, give an account of the thirty-three thousand crowns, ready money, that Montmorin paid you in the king's name under pretext of indemnifying you for your post of solicitor at the Châtelet."

"I was of the 14th of July," said Danton, haughtily.

"And the Garde-Meuble? and the crown diamonds?"

"I was of the 6th of October."

"And the thefts of your *alter ego*, Lacroix, in Belgium?"

"I was of the 20th of June."

"And the loans to the Montansier?"

"I urged the people on to the return from Varennes."

"And the opera-house, built with money that you furnished?"

"I armed the sections of Paris."

"And the hundred thousand livres, secret funds of the Ministry of Justice?"

"I caused the 10th of August."

"And the two millions for the Assembly's secret expenses, of which you took the fourth?"

"I stopped the enemy on their march, and I barred the passage to the kings in coalition."

"Prostitute!" said Marat.

"Danton was terrible as he rose to his full height.

"Yes!" cried he. "I am a harlot! I sold myself, but I saved the world!"

Robespierre had gone back to biting his nails. As for him, he could neither laugh nor smile. The laugh—the lightning—of Danton, and the smile—the sting—of Marat were both wanting to him.

Danton resumed:

"I am like the ocean—I have my ebb and flow; at low water my shoals may be seen; at high tide you may see my waves."

"You foam," said Marat.

"My tempest," said Danton.

Marat had risen at the same moment as Danton. He also exploded. The snake became suddenly a dragon.

"Ah!" cried he. "Ah, Robespierre! Ah, Danton! You will not listen to me! Well, you are lost; I tell you so. Your policy ends in an impossibility to go farther; you have no longer an outlet; and you do things which shut every door against you—except that of the tomb."

"That is our grandeur," said Danton.

He shrugged his shoulders.

Marat hurried on:

"Danton, beware. Vergniaud has also a wide mouth, thick lips, and frowning eyebrows; Vergniaud is pitted, too, like Mirabeau and like thee; that did not prevent the 31st of May. Ah, you shrug your shoulders! Sometimes a shrug of the shoulders makes the head fall. Danton, I tell thee, that big voice, that loose cravat, those top-boots, those little suppers, those great pockets—all those are things which concern Louisette."

Louisette was Marat's pet name for the guillotine.

He pursued:

"And as for thee, Robespierre, thou art a Moderate, but that will serve nothing. Go on—powder thyself, dress thy hair, brush thy clothes, play the vulgar coxcomb, have clean linen, keep curled and frizzed and bedizened; none the less thou wilt go to the Place de Grève! Read Brunswick's proclamation! Thou wilt get a treatment no less than that of the regicide Damiens! Fine as thou art, thou wilt be dragged at the tails of four horses."

"Echo of Coblentz!" said Robespierre between his teeth.

"I am the echo of nothing—I am the cry of the whole, Robespierre! Ah, you are young, you! How old art thou, Danton? Four-and-thirty. —How many are your years, Robespierre? Thirty-three. Well, I—I have lived always! I am the old human suffering—I am six thousand years old."

"That is true," retorted Danton. For six thousand years Cain has been preserved in hatred, like the toad in a rock; the rock breaks, Cain springs out among men, and is called Marat."

"Danton!" cried Marat, and a livid glare illuminated his eyes.

"Well, what?" asked Danton.

Thus these three terrible men conversed.

They were conflicting thunderbolts.

CHAPTER III

A STIRRING OF THE INMOST NERVES

THERE was a pause in the dialogue; these Titans withdrew for a moment each into his own reflections.

Lions dread hydras. Robespierre had grown very pale, and Danton very red. A shiver ran through the frames of both.

The wild-beast glare in Marat's eyes had died out; a calm, cold and imperious, settled again on the face of this man, dreaded by his formidable associates.

Danton felt himself conquered, but he would not yield. He resumed:

"Marat talks very loud about the dictatorship and unity, but he has only one ability—that of breaking to pieces."

Robespierre parted his thin lips, and said:

"As for me, I am of the opinion of Anacharsis Cloots, I say—Neither Roland nor Marat."

"And I," replied Marat, "I say—Neither Danton nor Robespierre."

He regarded both fixedly, and added:

"Let me give you advice, Danton. You are in love, you think of marrying again; do not meddle any more with politics—be wise."

And moving backward a step toward the door as if to go out, he made them a menacing salute, and said:

"Adieu, gentlemen."

Danton and Robespierre shuddered.

At this instant a voice rose from the bottom of the room, saying:

"You are wrong, Marat."

All three turned about. During Marat's explosion, some one had entered unperceived by the door at the end of the room.

"Is it you, Citizen Cimourdain?" asked Marat. "Good-day."

It was indeed Cimourdain.

"I say you are wrong, Marat," he repeated.

Marat turned green, which was his way of growing pale.

"You are useful, but Robespierre and Danton are necessary. Why threaten them? Union, union, citizens! The people expect unity."

This entrance acted like a dash of cold water, and had the effect that the arrival of a stranger does on a family quarrel—it calmed the surface, if not the depths.

Cimourdain advanced toward the table.

Danton and Robespierre knew him. They had often remarked among the public tribunals of the Convention this obscure but powerful man, whom the people saluted. Nevertheless, Robespierre, always a stickler for forms, asked:

"Citizen, how did you enter?"

"He belongs to the Évêché," replied Marat, in a voice in which a certain submission was perceptible.

Marat braved the Convention, led the Commune, and feared the Évêché. This is a law.

Mirabeau felt Robespierre stirring at some unknown depth below; Robespierre felt Marat stir; Marat felt Hébert stir; Hébert, Babeuf. As long as the underneath layers are still, the politician can advance; but under the most revolutionary there must be some subsoil, and the boldest stop in dismay when they feel under their feet the earthquake they have created.

To be able to distinguish the movement which covetousness causes from that brought about by principle—to combat the one and second the other—is the genius and the virtue of great revolutionists.

Danton saw that Marat faltered.

"Oh, Citizen Cimourdain is not one too many," said he.

And he held out his hand to the new-comer.

Then he said:

"Zounds, explain the situation to Citizen Cimourdain. He appears just at the right moment. I represent the Mountain; Robespierre represents the Committee of Public Safety; Marat represents the Commune; Cimourdain represents the Évêché. He is come to give the casting vote."

"So be it," said Cimourdain, simply and gravely. "What is the matter in question?"

"The Vendée," replied Robespierre.

"The Vendée!" repeated Cimourdain.

Then he continued: "There is the great danger. If the Revolution perish, she will perish by the Vendée. One Vendée is more formidable

than ten Germanies. In order that France may live, it is necessary to kill the Vendée."

These few words won him Robespierre.

Still Robespierre asked this question, "Were you not formerly a priest?"

MIRABEAU.

Cimourdain's priestly air did not escape Robespierre. He recognized in another that which he had within himself.

Cimourdain replied:

"Yes, citizen."

"What difference does that make?" cried Danton. "When priests

are good fellows, they are worth more than others. In revolutionary times, the priests melt into citizens, as the bells do into arms and cannon. Danjou is a priest; Daunou is a priest; Thomas Lindet is the Bishop of Evreux. Robespierre, you sit in the Convention side by side with Massieu, Bishop of Beauvais. The Grand Vicar Vaugeois was a member of the Insurrection Committee of August 10th. Chabot is a Capuchin. It was Dom Gerle who devised the tennis-court oath; it was the Abbé Audran who caused the National Assembly to be declared superior to the king; it was the Abbé Goutte who demanded of the Legislature that the dais should be taken away from Louis XVI.'s armchair; it was the Abbé Grégoire who proposed the abolition of royalty."

"Seconded," sneered Marat, "by the actor Collot d'Herbois. Between them they did the work; the priest overturned the throne, the comedian flung down the king."

"Let us get back to the Vendée," said Robespierre.

"Well, what is it?" demanded Cimourdain. "What is this Vendée doing now?"

Robespierre answered:

"This: she has found a chief. She becomes terrible."

"Who is this chief, Citizen Robespierre?"

"A *ci-devant* Marquis de Lantenac, who styles himself a Breton prince."

Cimourdain made a movement.

"I know him," said he; "I was chaplain in his house."

He reflected for a moment, then added:

"He was a man of gallantry before being a soldier."

"Like Biron, who was a Lauzun," said Danton.

And Cimourdain continued, thoughtfully: "Yes, an old man of pleasure. He must be terrible."

"Frightful," said Robespierre. "He burns the villages, kills the wounded, massacres the prisoners, shoots the women."

"The women!"

"Yes. Among others he had the mother of three children shot. Nobody knows what became of the little ones. He is really a captain: he understands war."

"Yes, in truth," replied Cimourdain. "He was in the Hanoverian war, and the soldiers said, Richelieu in appearance, Lantenac at the bottom. Lantenac was the real general. Talk about him to your colleague, Dussaulx."

Robespierre remained silent for a moment; then the dialogue began anew between him and Cimourdain.

"Well, Citizen Cimourdain, this man is in Vendée."

"Since when?"

"The last three weeks."

"He must be declared an outlaw."

"That is done."

"A price must be set on his head."

"It is done."

"A large reward must be offered to whoever will take him."

"That is done."

"Not in assignats."

"That is done."

"In gold."

"That is done."

"And he must be guillotined."

"That *will* be done."

"By whom?"

"By you."

"By me?"

"Yes; you will be delegated by the Committee of Public Safety with unlimited powers."

"I accept," said Cimourdain.

Robespierre made his choice of men rapidly—the quality of a true statesman. He took from the portfolio before him a sheet of white paper, on which could be read this printed heading: "THE FRENCH REPUBLIC ONE AND INDIVISIBLE. COMMITTEE OF PUBLIC SAFETY."

Cimourdain continued:

"Yes, I accept. The terrible against the terrible. Lantenac is ferocious; I shall be so too. War to the death against this man. I will deliver the Republic from him, please God."

He checked himself; then resumed:

"I am a priest; no matter; I believe in God."

"God has gone out of date," said Danton.

"I believe in God," said Cimourdain, unmoved.

Robespierre gave a sinister nod of approval.

Cimourdain asked:

"To whom am I delegated?"

"The commandant of the exploring division sent against Lantenac. Only—I warn you—he is a nobleman."

Danton cried out:

"That is another thing which matters little. A noble! Well, what then? It is with the nobles as with the priests. When one of either class is good, he is excellent. Nobility is a prejudice; but we should not have it in one sense more than the other; no more against than in

favor of it. Robespierre, is not Saint-Just a noble? Florelle de Saint-Just, zounds! Anacharsis Cloots is a baron. Our friend Charles Hesse, who never misses a meeting of the Cordeliers, is a prince, and the brother of the reigning Landgrave of Hesse-Rothenburg. Montaut, the intimate of Marat, is the Marquis de Montaut. There is in the Revolutionary Tribunal a juror, who is a priest—Vilate; and a juror who is a nobleman—Leroy, Marquis de Montflabert. Both are tried men."

"And you forget," added Robespierre, "the foreman of the revolutionary jury."

"Antonelle?"

"Who is the Marquis Antonelle," said Robespierre.

Danton continued:

"Dampierre was a nobleman, the one who lately got himself killed before Condé for the Republic; and Beaurepaire was a noble, he who blew his brains out, rather than open the gates of Verdun to the Prussians."

"All of which," grumbled Marat, "does not alter the fact that on the day Condorcet said, '*The Gracchi were nobles*,' Danton cried out, '*All nobles are traitors, beginning with Mirabeau and ending with thee.*'"

Cimourdain's grave voice made itself heard:

"Citizen Danton, Citizen Robespierre, you are perhaps right to have confidence, but the people distrusts them, and the people is not wrong in so doing. When a priest is charged with the surveillance of a nobleman, the responsibility is doubled, and it is necessary for the priest to be inflexible."

"True," said Robespierre.

Cimourdain added:

"And inexorable."

Robespierre replied:

"It is well said, Citizen Cimourdain. You will have to deal with a young man. You will have the ascendency over him, being double his age. It will be necessary to direct him, but he must be carefully managed. It appears that he possesses military talent—all the reports are unanimous as to that. He belongs to a corps which has been detached from the Army of the Rhine to go into Vendée. He arrives from the frontier, where he was noticeable for intelligence and courage. He leads the exploring column in a superior way. For fifteen days he has held the old Marquis de Lantenac in check. He restrains and drives him before him. He will end by forcing him to the sea, and tumbling him into it headlong. Lantenac has the cunning of an old general, and the audacity of a youthful captain. This young man has already ene-

mies, and those who are envious of him. The Adjutant-General Léchelle is jealous of him."

"That L'Échelle* wants to be commander-in-chief," interrupted Danton: "there is nothing in his favor but a pun—'It needs a ladder to get on top of a cart.' All the same. Charette† beats him."

"And he is not willing," pursued Robespierre, "that anybody besides himself should beat Lantenac. The misfortune of the Vendean war is in such rivalries. Heroes badly commanded—that is what our soldiers are. A simple captain of hussars, Chérin, enters Saumur with

trumpets playing *Ça ira;* he takes Saumur; he could keep on and take Cholet, but he has no orders, so he halts. All those commands of the Vendée must be remodeled. The head-quarters are scattered, the forces dispersed; a scattered army is an army paralyzed; it is a rock crumbled into dust. At the camp of Paramé there are only some tents. There are a hundred useless little companies posted between Tréguier and Dinan, of which a division might be formed that could guard the whole coast. Léchelle, supported by Parrein, strips the northern coast under pretext of protecting the southern, and so opens France to the English. A half-million peasants in revolt and a descent of England upon France —that is Lantenac's plan. The young commander of the exploring column presses his sword against Lantenac's loins, keeps it there, and beats him without Léchelle's permission; now Léchelle is his general,

* A ladder.

† Charrette—a cart.

so Léchelle denounces him. Opinions are divided in regard to this young man. Léchelle wants to have him shot. Prieur, of the Marne, wants to make him adjutant-general."

"This youth appears to me to possess great qualities," said Cimourdain.

"But he has one fault!" The interruption came from Marat.

"What is it?" demanded Cimourdain.

"Clemency," said Marat.

Then he added:

"He is firm in battle, and weak afterward. He shows indulgence; he pardons; he grants mercy; he protects devotees and nuns; he saves the wives and daughters of aristocrats; he releases prisoners; he sets priests free."

"A grave fault," murmured Cimourdain.

"A crime," said Marat.

"Sometimes," said Danton.

"Often," said Robespierre.

"Almost always," chimed in Marat.

"When one has to deal with the enemies of the country—always," said Cimourdain.

Marat turned toward him.

"And what, then, would you do with a Republican chief who set a Royalist chief at liberty?"

"I should be of Léchelle's opinion; I would have him shot."

"Or guillotined," said Marat.

"He might have his choice," said Cimourdain.

Danton began to laugh.

"I like one as well as the other."

"Thou art sure to have one or the other," growled Marat.

His glance left Danton and settled again on Cimourdain.

"So, Citizen Cimourdain, if a Republican leader were to flinch, you would cut off his head?"

"Within twenty-four hours."

"Well," retorted Marat, "I am of Robespierre's opinion; Citizen Cimourdain ought to be sent as delegate of the Committee of Public Safety to the commandant of the exploring division of the coast army. How is it you call this commandant?"

Robespierre answered:

"He is a *ci-devant* noble."

He began to turn over the papers.

"Get the priest to guard the nobleman," said Danton. "I distrust a priest when he is alone; I distrust a noble when he is alone. When

they are together, I do not fear them. One watches the other, and they do well."

The indignant look always on Cimourdain's face grew deeper, but without doubt finding the remark just at bottom, he did not look at Danton, but said in his stern voice:

"If the Republican commander who is confided to me makes one false step, the penalty will be death."

Robespierre, with his eyes on the portfolio, said:

"Here is the name, Citizen Cimourdain. The commandant, in regard to whom full powers will be granted you, is a so-called viscount; his name is Gauvain."

Cimourdain turned pale.

"Gauvain!" he cried.

Marat saw his sudden pallor.

"The Viscount Gauvain!" repeated Cimourdain.

"Yes," said Robespierre.

"Well?" said Marat, with his eyes fixed on the priest.

There was a brief silence, which Marat broke.

"Citizen Cimourdain, on the conditions named by yourself, do you accept the mission as commissioner delegate near the Commandant Gauvain? Is it decided?"

"It is decided," replied Cimourdain. He grew paler and paler.

Robespierre took the pen which lay near him, wrote in his slow, even hand four lines on the sheet of paper which bore the heading Committee of Public Safety, signed them, and passed the sheet and the

pen to Danton; Danton signed, and Marat, whose eyes had not left Cimourdain's livid face, signed after Danton.

Robespierre took the paper again, dated it, and gave it to Cimourdain, who read:

"Year II. of the Republic.

"Full powers are granted to Citizen Cimourdain, delegated Commissioner of Public Safety to the Citizen Gauvain, commanding the Exploring Division of the Army of the Coasts.

"Robespierre. Danton. Marat."

And beneath the signatures:

"June 28th, 1793."

The revolutionary calendar, called the Civil Calendar, had no legal existence at this time, and was not adopted by the Convention, on the proposition of Romme, until October 5th, 1793.

While Cimourdain read, Marat watched him.

He said in a half-voice, as if talking to himself:

"It will be necessary to have all this formalized by a decree of the Convention, or a special warrant of the Committee of Public Safety. There remains something yet to be done."

"Citizen Cimourdain, where do you live?" asked Robespierre.

"Court of Commerce."

"So do I, too," said Danton. "You are my neighbor."

Robespierre resumed:

"There is not a moment to lose. To-morrow you will receive your commission in form, signed by all the members of the Committee of Public Safety. This is a confirmation of the commission. It will accredit you in a special manner to the acting representatives, Philippeaux, Prieur of the Marne, Lecointre, Alquier, and the others. We know you. Your powers are unlimited. You can make Gauvain a general or send him to the scaffold. You will receive your commission to-morrow at three o'clock. When shall you set out?"

"At four," said Cimourdain.

And they separated.

As he entered his house, Marat informed Simonne Evrard that he should go to the Convention on the morrow.

THE
CONVENTION.
MEAULLE

BOOK III

THE CONVENTION

CHAPTER I

WE approach the grand summit.

Behold the Convention!

The gaze grows steady in presence of this height.

Never has a more lofty spectacle appeared on the horizon of mankind.

There is one Himalaya, and there is one Convention.

The Convention is perhaps the culminating point of History.

During its life-time—for it lived—men did not quite understand what it was. It was precisely the grandeur which escaped its contemporaries; they were too much scared to be dazzled. Every thing grand possesses a sacred horror. It is easy to admire mediocrities and hills, but whatever is too lofty, whether it be a genius or a mountain—an assembly as well as a masterpiece—alarms when seen too near. An immense height appears an exaggeration. It is fatiguing to climb. One loses breath upon acclivities, one slips down declivities, one is hurt by sharp, rugged heights which are in themselves beautiful; torrents in their foaming reveal the precipices; clouds hide the mountain-tops; a sudden ascent terrifies as much as a fall. Hence there is a greater sensation of fright than admiration. What one feels is fantastic enough—

an aversion to the grand. One sees the abyss and loses sight of the sublimity; one sees the monster and does not perceive the marvel. Thus the Convention was at first judged. It was measured by the purblind—it, which needed to be looked at by eagles.

To-day we see it in perspective, and it throws across the deep and distant heavens, against a background at once serene and tragic—the immense profile of the French Revolution.

CHAPTER II

THE 14th of July delivered.
The 10th of August blasted.
The 21st of September founded.

The 21st of September was the Equinox—was Equilibrium. *Libra*—the balance. It was, according to the remark of Romme, that under this sign of Equality and Justice the Republic was proclaimed. A constellation heralded it.

The Convention is the first avatar of the peoples. It was by the Convention that the grand new page opened and the future of to-day commenced.

Every idea must have a visible enfolding; a habitation is necessary to any principle; a church is God between four walls; every dogma must have a temple. When the Convention became a fact, the first problem to be solved was how to lodge the Convention.

At first the Riding-school, then the Tuileries, was taken. A platform was raised, scenery arranged—a great gray painting by David imitating bas-reliefs; benches were placed in order; there was a square tribune, parallel pilasters with plinths like blocks and long rectilinear stems; square inclosures, into which the spectators crowded, and which were called the public tribunes; a Roman velarium, Grecian draperies; and in these right angles and these straight lines the Convention was installed—the tempest confined within this geometrical plan. On the tribune, the Red Cap was painted in gray. The Royalists began by laughing at this gray red cap, this theatrical hall, this monument of pasteboard, this sanctuary of papier-maché, this Pantheon of mud and spittle. How quickly it would disappear! The columns were made of the staves from hogsheads, the arches were of deal boards, the bas-reliefs of mastic, the entablatures were of pine, the statues of plaster; the marbles were paint, the walls canvas; and of this provisional shelter France has made an eternal dwelling.

When the Convention began to hold its sessions in the Riding-school, the walls were covered with the placards which sprouted over Paris at the period of the return from Varennes.

On one might be read: *The king returns. Any person who cheers him shall be beaten; any person who insults him shall be hanged.*—On another: *Peace! Hats on! He is about to pass before his judges.*—On another: *The king has aimed at the nation. He has hung fire; it is now the nation's turn.*—On another: *The Law! The Law!*—It was within those walls that the Convention sat in judgment on Louis XVI.

At the Tuileries, where the Convention began to sit on the 10th of May, 1793, and which was called the Palais-National, the assembly-hall occupied the whole space between the Pavillon de l'Horloge, called the Pavilion of Unity, and the Pavillon Marsan, then named Pavilion of Liberty. The Pavilion of Flora was called Pavillon-Égalité. The hall was reached by the grand staircase of Jean Bullant. The whole ground-floor of the palace, beneath the story occupied by the Assembly, was a kind of long guard-room, littered with bundles and camp-beds of the troops of all arms, who kept watch about the Convention. The assembly had a guard of honor styled "the Grenadiers of the Convention."

A tricolored ribbon separated the palace where the Assembly sat from the garden in which the people came and went.

CHAPTER III

LET us finish the description of that sessions-hall. Every thing in regard to this terrible place is interesting.

What first struck the sight of any one entering was a great statue of Liberty placed between two wide windows. One hundred and forty feet in length; thirty-four feet in width; thirty-seven feet in height: such were the dimensions of this room, which had been the king's theatre, and which became the theatre of the Revolution. The elegant and magnificent hall, built by Vigarani for the courtiers, was hidden by the rude timber-work which in '93 supported the weight of the people. This framework, whereon the public tribunes were erected, had, a detail deserving notice, one single post for its only point of support. This post was of one piece, ten metres (32 feet 6 inches) in circumference. Few caryatides have labored like that beam; it supported for years the rude pressure of the Revolution. It sustained applause, enthusiasm, insolence, noise, tumult, riot—the immense chaos of opposing rages. It did not give way. After the Convention, it witnessed the Council of the Ancients. The 18th Brumaire relieved it.

Percier then replaced the wooden pillar by columns of marble, which did not last so well.

The ideal of architects is sometimes strange; the architect of the Rue de Rivoli had for his ideal the trajectory of a cannon-ball; the architect of Carlsruhe, a fan; a gigantic drawer would seem to have been the model of the architect who built the hall where the Convention began to sit on the 10th of May, 1793: it was long, high, and flat. At one of the sides of the parallelogram was a great semicircle; this amphitheatre contained the seats of the representatives, but without tables or desks. Garan-Coulon, who wrote a great deal, held his paper on his knee. In front of the seats was the tribune; before the tribune, the bust of Lepelletier Saint-Fargeau; behind was the President's arm-chair.

The head of the bust passed a little beyond the ledge of the tribune, for which reason it was afterward moved away from that position.

The amphitheatre was composed of nineteen semicircular rows of benches, rising one behind the other; the supports of the seats prolonging the amphitheatre into the two corners.

Below, in the horse-shoe at the foot of the tribune, the ushers had their places.

On one side of the tribune, a placard nine feet in length was fastened to the wall in a black wooden frame, bearing on two leaves, separated by a sort of sceptre, the "Declaration of the Rights of Man;" on the other side was a vacant place, at a later period occupied by a similar frame, containing the Constitution of Year II., with the leaves divided by a sword. Above the tribune, over the head of the orator, from a deep *loge* with double compartments always filled with people, floated three immense tricolored flags, almost horizontal, resting on an altar upon which could be read the word—Law. Behind this altar there arose, tall as a column, an enormous Roman fasces like the sentinel of free speech. Colossal statues, erect against the wall, faced the representatives. The President had Lycurgus on his right hand and Solon on his left; Plato towered above the Mountain.

These statues had plain blocks of wood for pedestals, resting on a long cornice which encircled the hall, and separated the people from the assembly. The spectators could lean their elbows on this cornice.

The black wooden frame of the proclamation of the *Rights of Man* reached to the cornice and broke the regularity of the entablature, an infraction of the straight line which caused Chabot to murmur: "It is ugly," he said to Vadier.

On the heads of the statues alternated crowns of oak-leaves and laurel. A green drapery, on which similar crowns were painted in deeper green, fell in heavy folds straight down from the cornice of the circumference, and covered the whole wall of the ground-floor occupied by the assembly. Above this drapery the wall was white and naked. In it, as if hollowed out by a gigantic axe, without moulding or foliage, were two stories of public tribunes, the lower ones square, the upper ones round. According to rule, for Vitruvius was not dethroned, the archivolts were superimposed upon the architraves. There were ten tribunes on each side of the hall, and two huge boxes at either end; in all, twenty-four. There the crowds gathered thickly.

The spectators in the lower tribunes, overflowing their borders, grouped themselves along the reliefs of the cornice. A long iron bar, firmly fixed at a height to lean on served as a safety rail to the upper tribunes, and guarded the spectators against the pressure of the throngs

mounting the stairs. Nevertheless, a man was once thrown headlong into the assembly; he fell partly upon Massieu, Bishop of Beauvais, and thus was not killed; he said, "Hallo! Why a bishop is really good for something!"

The hall of the Convention could hold two thousand persons comfortably; on the days of insurrection it held three.

The Convention held two sittings, one in the daytime and one in the evening.

The back of the President's chair was curved, and studded with gilt nails. The table was upheld by four winged monsters, with a single foot—one might have thought they had come out of the Apocalypse to assist at the Revolution. They seemed to have been unharnessed from Ezekiel's chariot to drag the dung-cart of Sanson.

On the President's table was a huge hand-bell, almost large enough to have served for a church; a great copper inkstand, and a parchment folio, which was the book of official reports.

Many times freshly severed heads, borne aloft on the tops of pikes, sprinkled their blood-drops over this table.

The tribune was reached by a staircase of nine steps. These steps were high, steep, and hard to mount. One day Gensonné stumbled as he was going up. "It is a scaffold-ladder," said he. "Serve your apprenticeship," Carrier cried out to him.

In the angles of the hall, where the wall had looked too naked, the architect had put Roman fasces for decorations, with the axe turned to the people.

At the right and left of the tribune were square blocks supporting two candelabra twelve feet in height, having each four pairs of lamps. There was a similar candelabrum in each public box. On the pedestals were carved circles, which the people called "guillotine-collars."

The benches of the Assembly reached almost to the cornice of the tribunes; so that the representatives and the spectators could talk together.

The outlets from the tribunes led into a labyrinth of sombre corridors, often filled with a savage din.

The Convention overcrowded the palace and flowed into the neighboring mansions—the Hôtel de Longueville and the Hôtel de Coigny. It was to the Hôtel de Coigny, if one may believe a letter of Lord Bradford's, that the royal furniture was carried after the 10th of August. It took two months to empty the Tuileries.

The committees were lodged in the neighborhood of the hall: in the Pavillon-Égalité were those of Legislation, Agriculture, and Commerce; in the Pavilion of Liberty were the Marine, the Colonies, Finance,

Assignats, and Public Safety; the War Department was at the Pavilion of Unity.

The Committee of General Security communicated directly with that of Public Safety by an obscure passage, lighted day and night with a reflector lamp, where the spies of all parties came and went. People spoke there in whispers.

The bar of the Convention was several times moved. Generally it was at the right of the President.

At the far ends of the hall the vertical partitions which closed the concentric semicircles of the amphitheatre left between them and the wall a couple of narrow, deep passages, from which opened two dark square doors.

The representatives entered directly into the hall by a door opening on the Terrace des Feuillants.

This hall, dimly lighted during the day by deep-set windows, took a strange nocturnal aspect when, with the approach of twilight, it was badly illuminated by lamps. Their pale glare intensified the evening shadows, and the lamplight sessions were lugubrious.

It was impossible to see clearly; from the opposite ends of the hall, to the right and to the left, indistinct groups of faces insulted each other. People met without recognizing one another. One day Laignelot, hurrying toward the tribune, hit against some person in the sloping passage between the benches. "Pardon, Robespierre," said he.—"For whom do you take me?" replied a hoarse voice.—"Pardon, Marat," said Laignelot.

At the bottom, to the right and left of the President, were two reserved tribunes—for, strange to say, the Convention had its privileged spectators. These tribunes were the only ones that had draperies. In the middle of the architrave two gold tassels held up the curtains. The tribunes of the people were bare.

The whole surroundings were peculiar and savage, yet correct. Regularity in barbarism is rather a type of revolution. The hall of the Convention offered the most complete specimen of what artists have since called "architecture Messidor;" it was massive, and yet frail.

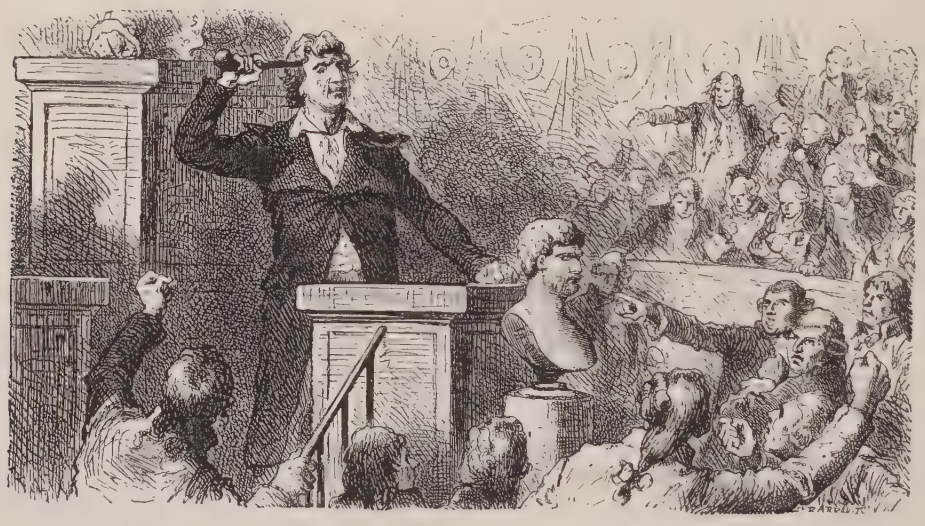
The builders of that time mistook symmetry for beauty. The last word of the Renaissance had been uttered under Louis XV., and a reaction followed. The noble was pushed to insipidity, and the pure to absurdity. Prudery may exist in architecture. After the dazzling orgies of form and color of the eighteenth century, Art took to fasting, and only allowed herself the straight line. This species of progress ends in ugliness, and Art reduced to a skeleton is the phenomenon which

results. The fault of this sort of wisdom and abstinence is that the style is so severe that it becomes meagre.

Outside of all political emotion, there was something in the very architecture of this hall which made one shiver. One recalled confusedly the ancient theatre with its garlanded boxes, its blue and crimson ceiling, its prismed lustres, its girandoles with diamond reflections, its brilliant hangings, its profusion of Cupids and Nymphs on the curtain and draperies, the whole royal and amorous idyl—painted, sculptured, gilded —which had brightened this sombre spot with its smile, where now one saw on every side hard rectilinear angles, cold and sharp as steel; it was something like Boucher guillotined by David.

CHAPTER IV

BUT when one saw the Assembly, the hall was forgotten. Whoever looked at the drama no longer remembered the theatre. Nothing more chaotic and more sublime. A crowd of heroes; a mob of cowards. Fallow deer on a mountain; reptiles in a marsh. Therein swarmed, elbowed one another, provoked



one another, threatened, struggled, and lived, all those combatants who are phantoms to-day.

A convocation of Titans.

To the right, the Gironde, a legion of thinkers; to the left, the Mountain, a group of athletes. On one side Brissot, who had received the keys of the Bastile; Barbaroux, whom the Marseillais obeyed; Kervélégan, who had under his hand the battalion of Brest, garrisoned in the Faubourg Saint-Marceau; Gensonné, who had established the

supremacy of the representatives over the generals; the fatal Guadet, to whom the queen one night, at the Tuileries, showed the sleeping Dauphin: Guadet kissed the forehead of the child, and caused the head of the father to fall. Salles, the crack-brained denouncer of the intimacy between the Mountain and Austria. Sillery, the cripple of the Right, as Couthon was the paralytic of the Left. Lause-Duperret, who having been called a scoundrel by a journalist, invited him to dinner, saying, "I know that by scoundrel you simply mean a man who does not think like yourself." Rabaut Saint-Étienne, who commenced his Almanac for

BRISSOT. BARBAROUX.

1790 with this saying: "The Revolution is ended." Quinette, one of those who overthrew Louis XVI.; the Jansenist Camus, who drew up the civil constitution of the clergy, believed in the miracles of the Deacon Paris, and prostrated himself each night before a figure of Christ seven feet high, which was nailed to the wall of his chamber. Fauchet, a priest, who, with Camille Desmoulins, brought about the 14th of July; Isnard, who committed the crime of saying "*Paris will be destroyed*" at the same moment when Brunswick was saying "*Paris shall be burned.*" Jacob Dupont, the first who cried "*I am an Atheist,*" and to whom Robespierre replied, "*Atheism is aristocratic.*" Lanjuinais, stern, sagacious, and valiant Breton; Ducos, the Euryalus of Boyer-Fonfrède;

Rebecqui, the Pylades of Barbaroux: Rebecqui gave in his resignation because Robespierre had not yet been guillotined. Richaud, who combated the permanency of the Sections. Lasource, who had given utterance to the murderous apophthegm, "*Woe to grateful nations!*" and who was afterward to contradict himself at the foot of the scaffold by this haughty sarcasm flung at the Mountainists: "*We die because the people sleep; you will die because the people awake.*" Biroteau, who caused the abolition of inviolability to be decreed; who was also, without knowing it, the forger of the axe, and raised the scaffold for himself. Charles Villatte, who sheltered his conscience behind this protest: "*I will not vote under the hatchet.*" Louvet, the author of *Faublas*, who was to end as a bookseller in the Palais Royal, with Lodoiska behind the counter. Mercier, author of the *Picture of Paris*, who exclaimed, "*On the 21st of January, all kings felt for the backs of their necks!*" Marec, whose anxiety was "the faction of the ancient limits." The journalist Carra, who said to the headsman at the foot of the scaffold, "*It bores me to die. I would have liked to see the continuation.*" Vigée, who called himself a grenadier in the second battalion of Mayenne and Loire, and who, when menaced by the public tribunals, cried, "I demand that at the first murmur of the tribunals we all withdraw and march on Versailles, sabre in hand!" Buzot, reserved for death by famine; Valazé, destined to die by his own dagger; Condorcet, who was to perish at Bourg-la-Reine (become Bourg-Égalité), betrayed by the Horace which he had in his pocket; Pétion, whose destiny was to be adored by the crowd in 1792 and devoured by wolves in 1794: twenty others still—Pontecoulant, Marboz, Lidon, Saint-Martin, Dussaulx, the translator of Juvenal, who had been in the Hanover campaign; Boileau, Bertrand, Lesterp-Beauvais, Lesage, Gomaire, Gardien, Mainvelle, Duplentier, Lacaze, Antiboul, and at their head a Barnave, who was styled Vergniaud.

On the other side, Antoine Louis Léon Florelle de Saint-Just, pale, with a low forehead, a regular profile, eye mysterious, a profound sadness, aged twenty-three. Merlin of Thionville, whom the Germans called *Feuerteufel*—"the fire-devil." Merlin of Douai, the culpable author of the *Law of the Suspected.* Soubrany, whom the people of Paris at the first Prairial demanded for general. The ancient priest Lebon, holding a sabre in the hand which had sprinkled holy water; Billaud Varennes, who foresaw the magistracy of the future, without judges or arbiters; Fabre d'Églantine, who fell upon a delightful treasure-trove—the Republican Calendar, just as Rouget de Lisle had a single sublime inspiration—the *Marseillaise;* neither one nor the other ever produced a second. Manuel, the attorney of the Commune, who had said, "*A dead king is not a man the less.*" Goujon, who had entered

Tripstadt, Neustadt, and Spires, and had seen the Prussian army flee. Lacroix, a lawyer turned into a general, named Chevalier of Saint-Louis, six days before the 10th of August. Fréron Thersites, the son of Fréron Zöilus. Ruth, the inexorable searcher of the iron cupboard, predestined to a great republican suicide—he was to kill himself the day the Republic died. Fouché, with the soul of a demon and the face of a corpse. Camboulas, the friend of Father Duchesne, who said to Guillotin, "*Thou belongest to the Club of the Feuillants, but thy daughter belongs to the Jacobin Club.*" Jagot, who to such as complained to him

VERGNIAUD. SAINT-JUST.

of the nudity of the prisoners, replied by this savage saying, "*A prison is a dress of stone.*" Javogues, the terrible desecrator of the tombs of Saint-Denis. Osselin, a proscriber, who hid one of the proscribed, Madame Charry, in his house. Bentabolle, who, when he was in the chair, made signs to the tribunes to applaud or hoot. The journalist Robert, the husband of Mademoiselle Kéralio, who wrote: "*Neither Robespierre nor Marat come to my house. Robespierre may come when he wishes—Marat, never.*" Garan Coulon, who, when Spain interfered in the trial of Louis XVI., haughtily demanded that the Assembly should not deign to read the letter of a king in behalf of a king. Grégoire, a bishop, at first worthy of the Primitive Church, but who afterward,

under the Empire, effaced Grégoire the Republican beneath the Count Grégoire. Amar, who said: "*The whole earth condemns Louis XVI. To whom, then, appeal for judgment? To the planets?* Rouyer, who, on the 21st of January, opposed the firing of the cannon of Pont Neuf, saying, "*A king's head ought to make no more noise in falling than the head of another man.*" Chénier, the brother of André; Vadier, one of those who laid a pistol on the tribunes; Tanis, who said to Momoro, "*I wish Marat and Robespierre to embrace at my table.*"—"*Where dost thou live?*"—"*At Charenton.*"—"*Anywhere else would have astonished me,*"

JOSEPH CHÉNIER. DAVID.

replied Momoro. Legendre, who was the butcher of the French Revolution, as Pride had been of the English. "*Come, that I may knock you down,*" he cried to Lanjuinais.—"*First have it decreed that I am a bullock,*" replied Lanjuinais. Collot d'Herbois, that lugubrious comedian who had the face of the antique mask, with two mouths which said yes and no, approving with one while he blamed with the other; branding Carrier at Nantes and defying Châlier at Lyons; sending Robespierre to the scaffold and Marat to the Pantheon. Génissieux, who demanded the penalty of death against whomsoever should have upon him a medallion of "*Louis XVI. martyred.*" Léonard Bourdon, the schoolmaster, who had offered his house to the old man of Mont Jura. Top-

sent, sailor; Goupilleau, lawyer; Laurent Lecointre, merchant; Duhem, physician; Sergent, sculptor; David, painter; Joseph Égalité, prince.

Others still: Lecointe Puiraveau, who asked that a decree should be passed declaring Marat mad. Robert Lindet, the disquieting creator of that devil-fish whose head was the Committee of General Surety, and which covered France with its one-and-twenty thousand arms called revolutionary committees. Lebœuf, upon whom Girez-Dupré, in his *Christmas of False Patriots*, had made this epigram:

"*Lebœuf vit Legendre et beugla.*"

TALLIEN.

Thomas Payne, the clement American; Anacharsis Cloots, German, baron, millionaire, atheist, Hébertist, candid. The upright Lebas, the friend of the Duplays. Rovère, one of those strange men who are wicked for wickedness' sake; for the art, from love of the art, exists more frequently than people believe. Charlier, who wished that "you" should be employed in addressing aristocrats. Tallien, elegiac and ferocious, who will bring about the 9th Thermidor from love. Cambacérès, a lawyer, who will be a prince later. Carrier, an attorney, who will become a tiger. Laplanche, who will one day cry, "*I demand priority for the alarm-gun.*" Thuriot, who desired the vote of the Revolutionary Tribunal to be given aloud. Bourdon of the Oise, who challenged Chambon to a duel, denounced Payne, and was himself denounced

by Hébert. Fayau, who proposed the sending of "an army of incendiaries" into the Vendée. Tavaux, who, on the 13th of April, was almost a mediator between the Gironde and the Mountain. Vernier, who proposed that the chiefs of the Gironde and the Mountain should be sent to serve as common soldiers. Rewbell, who shut himself up in Mayence. Bourbotte, who had his horse killed under him at the taking of Saumur. Guimberteau, who directed the army of the Cherbourg coast. Jard Panvilliers, who managed the army of the coasts of Rochelle. Lecarpentier, who led the squadron of Cancale. Roberjot, for whom the ambush of Rastadt was waiting. Prieur of the Marne, who bore in camp his old rank of major. Levasseur of the Sarthe, who by a word decided Serrent, commandant of the battalion of Saint-Amand, to kill himself. Reverchon, Maure, Bernard de Saintes, Charles Richard, Lequinio, and at the summit of this group a Mirabeau, who was called Danton.

Outside the two camps, and keeping both in awe, rose the man Robespierre.

CHAPTER V

BELOW crouched Dismay, which may be noble; and Fear, which is base. Beneath passions, beneath heroisms, beneath devotion, beneath rage, was the gloomy cohort of the Anonymous. The shoals of the Assembly were called the Plain. There was every thing there which floats; the men who doubt, who

SIEYÈS. CAMILLE DESMOULINS.

hesitate, who recoil, who adjourn, who wait, each one fearing somebody. The Mountain was made up of the Select; the Gironde of the Select; the Plain was a crowd. The Plain was summed up and condensed in Sieyès.

Sieyès, a profound man, who had grown chimerical. He had stopped at the Tiers-État, and had not been able to mount up to the people. Certain minds are made to rest half-way. Sieyès called Robespierre a tiger, and was called a mole by Robespierre. This metaphysician had stranded, not on wisdom, but prudence. He was the courtier, not the servitor, of the Revolution. He seized a shovel, and went with the people to work in the Champ de Mars; harnessed to the same cart as Alexander de Beauharnais. He counseled energy, but never showed it. He said to the Girondists, "*Put the cannon on your side.*" There are thinkers who are wrestlers: those were, like Condorcet, with Vergniaud; or, like Camille Desmoulins, with Danton. There are thinkers whose aim is to preserve their lives: such were with Sieyès.

The best working vats have their lees. Underneath the Plain even was the Marsh, a hideous stagnation which exposed to view the transparencies of egotism. There shivered the fearful in dumb expectation. Nothing could be more abject. A conglomeration of shames feeling no shame; hidden rage; revolt under servitude. They were afraid in a cynical fashion; they had all the desperation of cowardice; they preferred the Gironde and chose the Mountain; the final catastrophe depended upon them; they poured toward the successful side; they delivered Louis XVI. to Vergniaud, Vergniaud to Danton, Danton to Robespierre, Robespierre to Tallien. They put Marat in the pillory when living, and deified him when dead. They upheld every thing up to the day when they overturned every thing. They had the instinct to give the decisive push to whatever tottered. In their eyes—since they had undertaken to serve on condition that the basis was solid—to waver was to betray them. They were number; they were force; they were fear. From thence came the audacity of turpitude.

Thence came May 31st, the 11th Terminal, the 9th Thermidor: tragedies knotted by giants and untied by dwarfs.

CHAPTER VI

AMONG these men full of passions were mingled men filled with dreams. Utopia was there under all its forms: under its warlike form, which admitted the scaffold, and under its innocent form, which would abolish capital punishment; phantom as it faced thrones; angel as it regarded the people. Side by

CARNOT. CONDORCET.

side with the spirits that fought were the spirits that brooded. These had war in their heads, those peace. One brain, Carnot, brought forth fourteen armies; another intellect, Jean Debry, meditated a universal democratic federation.

Amid this furious eloquence, among these shrieking and growling voices, there were fruitful silences. Lakanal remained voiceless, and combined in his thoughts the system of public national education; Lanthenas held his peace, and created the primary schools; Revellière Lépaux kept still, and dreamed of the elevation of Philosophy to the dignity of Religion. Others occupied themselves with questions of detail, smaller and more practical. Guyton Morveaux studied means for rendering the hospitals healthy; Maire, the abolition of existing servitudes; Jean Bon Saint-André, the suppression of imprisonment for debt and constraint of the person; Romme, the proposition of Chappe; Duboë, the putting the archives in order; Coren Fustier, the creation of the Cabinet of Anatomy and the Museum of Natural History; Guyomard, river navigation and the damming of the Scheldt. Art had its monomaniacs. On the 21st of January, while the head of monarchy was falling on the Place de la Revolution, Bézard, the representative of the Oise, went to see a picture of Rubens, which had been found in a garret in the Rue Saint-Lazare. Artists, orators, prophets, men-giants like Danton, child-men like Cloots, gladiators and philosophers, all had the same goal—Progress. Nothing disconcerted them. The grandeur of the Convention was, the searching how much reality there is in what men call the impossible. At one extreme, Robespierre had his eye fixed on Law; at the other, Condorcet had his fixed on Duty.

Condorcet was a man of revery and enlightenment. Robespierre was a man of execution; and sometimes, in the final crises of worn-out orders, execution means extermination. Revolutions have two currents —an ebb and a flow; and on these float all seasons, from that of ice to flowers. Each zone of these currents produces men adapted to its climate, from those who live in the sun to those who dwell among the thunderbolts.

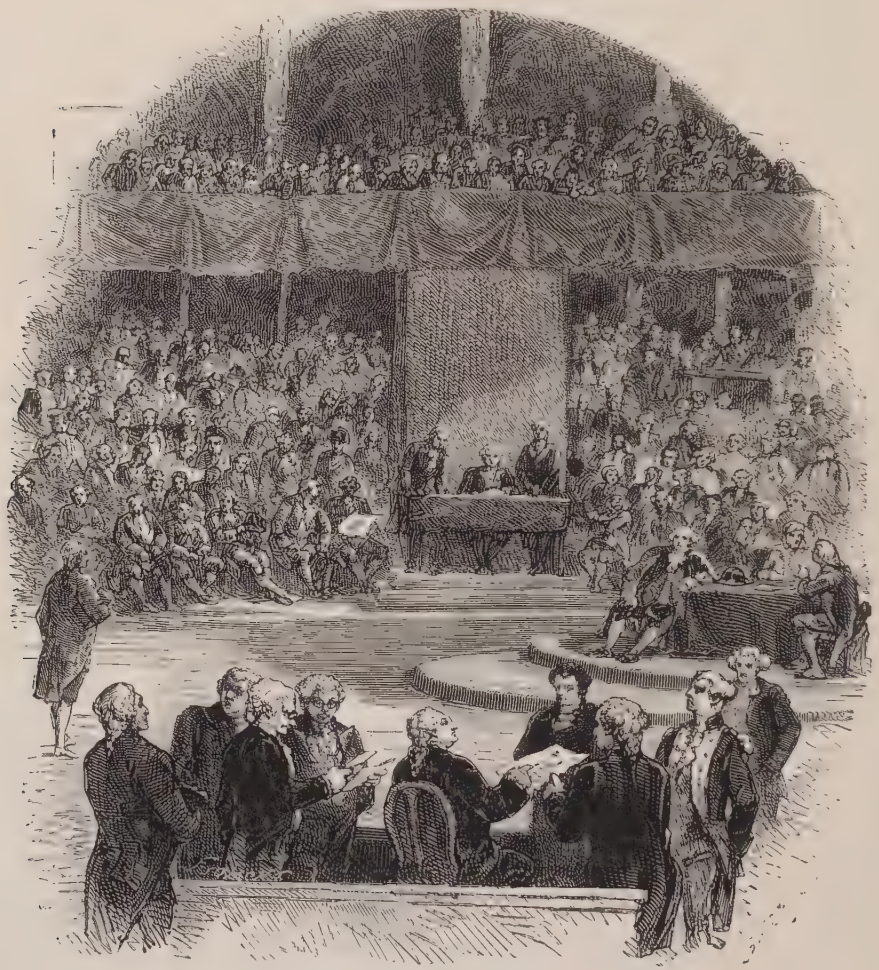
LOUIS XVI.

CHAPTER VII

PEOPLE showed each other the recess of the left-hand passage, where Robespierre had uttered low in the ear of Garat, Clavière's friend, this terrible epigram: "*Clavière has conspired wherever he has respired.*" In this same recess, convenient for words needed to be spoken aside and for half-voiced cholers, Fabre d'Églantine had quarreled with Romme, and reproached him for having disfigured his calendar by changing *Ferridor* into *Thermidor.* So, too, was shown the angle where, elbow to elbow, sat the seven representatives of the Haute-Garonne, who, first called to pronounce their verdict upon Louis XVI., thus responded, one after the other—Mailhe, "Death;" Delmas, "Death;" Projean, "Death;" Calès, "Death;" Ayral, "Death;" Julien, "Death;" Desaby, "Death."

Eternal reverberation, which fills all history, and which, since human justice has existed, has always given an echo of the sepulchre to the wall of the tribunal. People pointed out with their fingers, among that group of stormy faces, all the men from whose mouths had come the uproar of tragic notes. Paganel, who said—"*Death! A king is only made useful by death.*" Millaud, who said—"*To-day, if death did not exist, it would be necessary to invent it.*" The old Raffon du Trouillet, who said—"*Speedy death!*" Goupilleau, who cried—"*The scaffold at once. Delay aggravates dying.*" Sieyès, who said, with funereal brevity—"*Death!*" Thuriot—who had rejected the appeal to the people proposed by Buzot—"*What! The primary assemblies! What! Forty-four thousand tribunals! A case without limit. The head of Louis XVI. would have time to whiten before it would fall.*" Augustin Bon Robespierre, who, after his brother, cried—"*I know nothing of the humanity which slaughters the people and pardons despots. Death! To demand a reprieve is to substitute an appeal to tyrants for the appeal to the people.*" Foussedoire, the substitute of Bernardin de Saint-Pierre, who had said—"*I have a horror of human bloodshed, but the blood of a king is*

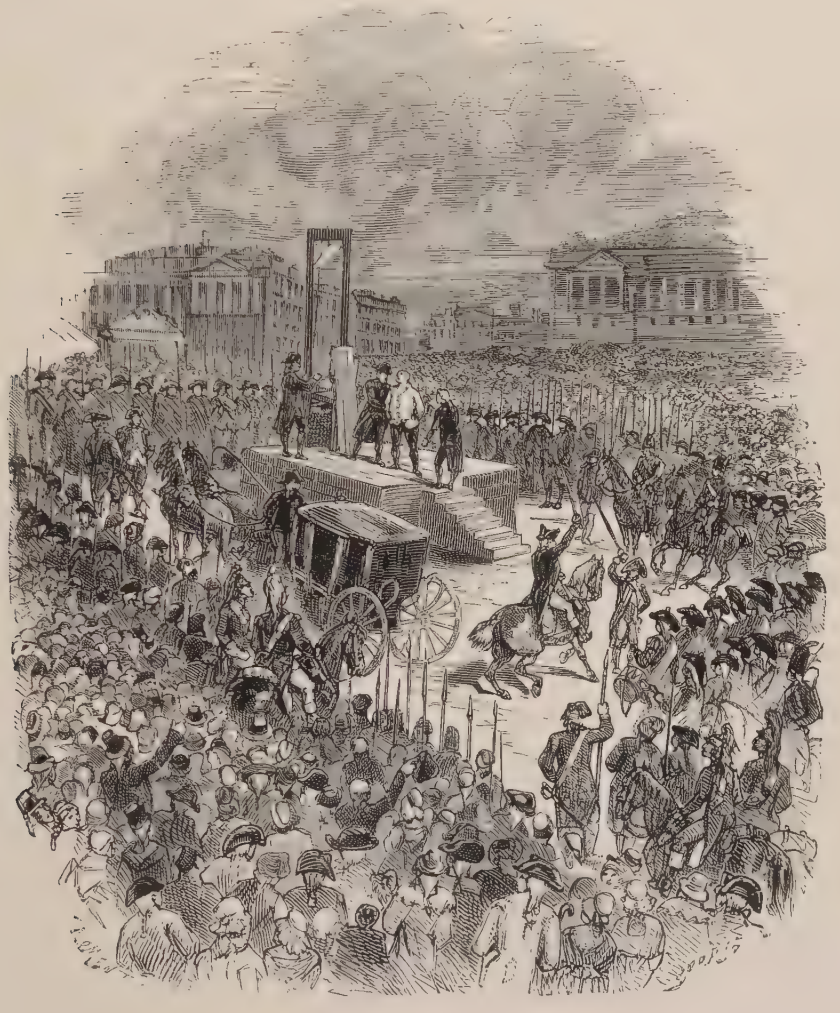
not a man's blood. Death!" Jean Bon Saint-André, who said—"*No free peòple without a dead tyrant.*" Lavicomterie, who proclaimed this formula—"*So long as the tyrant breathes, Liberty is suffocated! Death!*" Châteauneuf Randon, who had uttered this cry—"*Death to the last*



Louis!" Guyardin, who had said—"*Let the Barrière Renversée be executed.*" The Barrière Renversée was the Barrière du Trône. Tellier, who had said—"*Let there be forged, to aim against the enemy, a cannon of the calibre of Louis XVI.'s head.*" And the indulgents: Gentil, who said—"*I vote for confinement. To make a Charles I. is to make a Cromwell.*" Bancal, who said—"*Exile. I want to see the first king of the earth condemned to a trade in order to earn his livelihood.*" Albouys, who

MARIE ANTOINETTE.

said—"*Banishment! Let this living ghost go wander among the thrones.*" Zangiaconi, who said—"*Confinement. Let us keep Capet alive as a scarecrow.*" Chaillon, who said—"*Let him live. I do not wish to make a dead man of whom Rome will make a saint.*"



While these sentences fell from those severe lips and dispersed themselves one after another into history, women in low-necked dresses and decorated with gems sat in the tribunes, list in hand, counting the voices and pricking each vote with a pin.

Where tragedy entered, horror and pity remain.

To see the Convention, no matter at what period of its reign, was to see anew the trial of the last Capet. The legend of the 21st of Janu-

ary seemed mingled with all its acts; the formidable Assembly was full of those fatal breaths which blew upon the old torch of monarchy, that had burned for eighteen centuries, and extinguished it. The decisive trials of all kings in that judgment pronounced upon one king was like the point of departure in the great war made against the Past. Whatever might be the sitting of the Convention at which one was present, the shadow of Louis XVI.'s scaffold was seen thrust forward within it. Spectators recounted to one another the resignation of Kersaint, the resignation of Roland, Duchâtel, the deputy of the Deux-Sèvres, who, being ill, had himself carried to the Convention on his bed, and dying voted the king's life, which caused Marat to laugh; and they sought with their eyes the representative whom history has forgotten, he who, after that session of thirty-seven hours, fell back on his bench overcome by fatigue and sleep, and when roused by the usher as his turn to vote arrived, half opened his eyes, said "*Death*," and fell asleep again.

At the moment Louis XVI. was condemned to death, Robespierre had still eighteen months to live; Danton, fifteen months; Vergniaud, nine months; Marat, five months and three weeks; Lepelletier Saint-Fargeau, one day. Quick and terrible blast from human mouths!

CHARLOTTE CORDAY KILLING MARAT.

CHAPTER VIII

THE people had a window opening on the Convention—the public tribunes; and, when the window was not sufficient, they opened the door, and the street entered the Assembly. These invasions of the crowd into that senate make one of the most astounding visions of history. Ordinarily those irruptions were amicable. The market-place fraternized with the curule chair. But it was a formidable cordiality—that of a people who one day took within three hours the cannon of the Invalides and forty thousand muskets besides. At each instant a troop interrupted the deliberations; deputations presented at the bar petitions, homages, offerings. The pike of honor of the Faubourg Saint-Antoine entered, borne by women. Certain English offered twenty thousand pairs of shoes for the naked feet of our soldiers. "The citizen Arnoux," announced the *Moniteur*, "Curé of Aubignan, Commandant of the Battalion of Drôme, asks to march to the frontiers, and desires that his cure may be preserved for him."

Delegates from the Sections arrived, bringing on hand-barrows dishes, patens, chalices, monstrances, heaps of gold, silver, and enamel, presented to the country by this multitude in rags, who demanded for recompense the permission to dance the Carmagnole before the Convention. Chenard, Narbonne, and Vallière came to sing couplets in honor of the Mountain. The Section of Mont Blanc brought the bust of Lepelletier, and a woman placed a red cap on the head of the President, who embraced her. The citizenesses of the Section of the Mail "flung flowers" to the legislators. "The pupils of the country" came, headed by music, to thank the Convention for having prepared the prosperity of the century. The women of the Section of the Gardes Françaises offered roses; the women of the Champs Elysées Section gave a crown of oak-leaves; the women of the Section of the Temple

came to the bar to swear "*only to unite themselves with true Republicans.*" The Section of Molière presented a medal of Franklin, which was suspended by decree to the crown of the statue of Liberty. The Foundlings—declared the Children of the Republic—filed through, habited in the national uniform. The young girls of the Section of Ninety-two

arrived in long white robes, and the *Moniteur* of the following morning contained this line—"The President received a bouquet from the innocent hands of a young beauty." The orators saluted the crowds, sometimes flattered them: they said to the multitude, "*Thou art infallible; thou art irreproachable; thou art sublime.*" The people has an infantile side; it likes those sugar-plums. Sometimes Riot traversed the Assembly: entered furious and withdrew appeased, like the Rhone which

DEATH OF ROBESPIERRE.

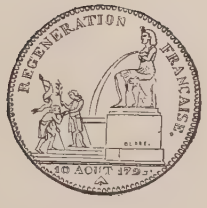
traverses Lake Leman, and is mud when it enters and pure and azure when it pours out.

Sometimes the crowd was less pacific, and Henriot was obliged to come with his furnaces for heating shot to the entrance of the Tuileries.

CHAPTER IX

AT the same time that it threw off revolution, this Assembly produced civilization. Furnace, but forge too. In this caldron, where terror bubbled, progress fermented. Out of this chaos of shadow, this tumultuous flight of clouds, spread immense rays of light parallel to the eternal laws. Rays that have remained on the horizon, visible forever in the heaven of the peoples, and which are, one, Justice; another, Tolerance; another, Goodness; another, Right; another, Truth; another, Love. The Convention promulgated this grand axiom: "*The liberty of each citizen ends where the liberty of another citizen commences;*" which comprises in two lines all human social law. It declared indigence sacred; it declared infirmity sacred in the blind and the deaf and dumb, who became wards of the state; maternity sacred in the girl-mother, whom it consoled and lifted up; infancy sacred in the orphan, whom it caused to be adopted by the country; innocence sacred in the accused who was acquitted, whom it indemnified. It branded the slave-trade; it abolished slavery. It proclaimed civic joint responsibility. It decreed gratuitous instruction. It organized national education by the normal school of Paris; central schools in the chief towns; primary schools in the communes. It created the academies of music and the museums. It decreed the unity of the Code, the unity of weights and measures, and the unity of calculation by the decimal system. It established the finances of France, and caused public credit to succeed to the long monarchical bankruptcy. It put the telegraph in operation; to old age it gave endowed almshouses; to sickness, purified hospitals; to instruction, the Polytechnic School; to science, the Bureau of Longitudes; to human intellect, the Institute. At the same time that it was national it was cosmopolitan. Of the eleven thousand two hundred and ten decrees which emanated from the Convention, a third had a political aim, two thirds a human aim.

It declared universal morality the basis of Society, and universal conscience the basis of Law. And all that servitude abolished, fraternity proclaimed, humanity protected, human conscience rectified, the law of work transformed into right, and from onerous made honorable —national riches consolidated, childhood instructed and raised up, letters and sciences propagated, light illuminating all heights, aid to all sufferings, promulgation of all principle—the Convention accomplished, having in its bowels that hydra, the Vendée, and upon his shoulders that heap of tigers, the kings.



CHAPTER X

IMMENSE place! All types were there—human, inhuman, superhuman. Epic gathering of antagonisms. Guillotin avoiding David, Bazire insulting Chabot, Guadet mocking Saint-Just, Vergniaud disdaining Danton, Louvet attacking Robespierre, Buzot denouncing Égalité, Chambon branding Pache, all execrating Marat. And how many names remain still to be registered! Armonville, styled Bonnet Rouge, because he always attended the sittings in a Phrygian cap, a friend of Robespierre, and wishing, "after Louis XVI., to guillotine Robespierre in order to restore an equilibrium." Massieu, colleague and counterpart of that good Lamourette, a bishop fitted to leave his name to a kiss. Lehardy of the Morbihan, stigmatizing the priests of Brittany; Barère, the man of majorities, who presided when Louis XVI. appeared at the bar, and who was to Paméla what Louvet was to Lodoiska; the Oratorian Daunou, who said, "*Let us gain time;*" Dubois Crancé, close to whose ear leaned Marat; the Marquis de Châteauneuf, Laclos, Hérault of Séchelles, who recoiled before Henriot crying, "*Gunners, to your pieces!*" Julien, who compared the Mountain to Thermopylæ; Gamon, who desired a public tribune reserved solely for women; Laloy, who adjudged the honors of the séance to the Bishop Gobel coming into the Convention to lay down his mitre and put on the red cap; Lecomte, who exclaimed, "*So the honors are for whosoever will unfrock himself!*"

Féraud, whose head Boissy d'Anglas saluted, leaving this question to history: "Did Boissy d'Anglas salute the head, that is to say, the victim, or the pike, that is to say, the assassins?" The two brothers Duprat, one a member of the Mountain, the other of the Gironde, who hated each other like the two brothers Chénier.

At this tribune were uttered those mysterious words which sometimes possess unconsciously to those who pronounce them the prophetic

D'ANGLAS UNCOVERING BEFORE THE HEAD OF THE DEPUTY FERAND.

accent of revolutions, and in whose wake material facts appear suddenly to assume an inexplicable discontent and passion, as if they had taken umbrage at the things just heard; events seem angered by words; catastrophes follow furious, and as if exasperated by the speech of men. Thus a voice upon a mountain suffices to set the avalanche in motion. A word too much may be followed by a landslip. If no one had spoken, the catastrophe would not have happened. You might say sometimes that events are irascible.

ELIZABETH DUPLAY.

It was thus, by the hazard of an orator's ill-comprehended word, that Madame Elizabeth's head fell.

At the Convention intemperance of language was a right.

Threats flew about and crossed one another like sparks in a conflagration.

PÉTION: "Robespierre, come to the point."

ROBESPIERRE: "The point is yourself, Pétion; I shall come to it, and you will see it."

A VOICE: "Death to Marat."

Marat: "The day Marat dies there will be no more Paris, and the day that Paris expires there will be no longer a Republic."

Billaud Varennes rises, and says, "We wish——"

Barère interrupts him: "Thou speakest like a king."

Another day, Philippeaux says, "A member has drawn his sword upon me."

AUDOUIN: "President, call the assassin to order."

THE PRESIDENT: "Wait."

PANIS: "President, I call you to order—I!"

There was rude laughter moreover.

LECOINTRE: "The Curé of Chant de Bout complains of Fauchet, his bishop, who forbids his marrying."

A VOICE: "I do not see why Fauchet, who has mistresses, should wish to hinder others from having wives."

A SECOND VOICE: "Priest, take a wife!"

The galleries joined in the conversation. They said "thee" and "thou" to the members. One day the representative Ruamps mounted to the tribune. He had one hip very much larger than the other. A spectator, crying out, thus jeered him: "Turn that toward the Right, since thou hast a cheek *à la David.*

Such were the liberties the people took with the Convention.

On one occasion, however, during the tumult of the 11th of April, 1793, the President commanded a disorderly person in the tribunes to be arrested.

One day when the session had for witness the old Buonarotti, Robespierre takes the floor and speaks for two hours, staring at Danton, sometimes straight in the face, which was serious, sometimes obliquely, which was worse. He thunders on to the end, however. He closes with an indignant outburst full of menacing words. "The conspirators are known; the corrupters and the corrupted are known; the traitors are known; they are in this assembly. They hear us; we see them, and we do not move our eyes from them. Let them look above their heads, and they will see the sword of the law; let them look into their conscience, and they will see their own infamy. Let them beware." And, when Robespierre has finished, Danton, with his face raised toward the ceiling, his eyes half closed, one arm hanging loosely down, throws himself back in his seat, and is heard to hum:

> "Cadet Roussel fait des discours,
> Qui ne sont pas longs quand ils sont courts."*

Imprecations followed one another. Conspirator! Assassin! Scoundrel! Factionist! Moderate! They denounced each other to the bust of Brutus that stood there. Apostrophes, insults, challenges. Furious glances from one side to the other; fists shaken; pistols allowed to be

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* "Cadet Roussel doth make his speech
Quite short when it no length doth reach."

seen; poniards half drawn. Terrible blazing forth in the tribune. Certain persons talked as if they were driven back against the guillotine. Heads wavered, frightened and awed. Mountainists, Girondists, Feuillantists, Moderates, Terrorists, Jacobins, Cordeliers, eighteen regicide priests.

All these men, a mass of vapors driven wildly in every direction.

CHAPTER XI

SPIRITS which were a prey of the wind.

But this was a miracle-working wind.

To be a member of the Convention was to be a wave of the ocean. This was true even of the greatest there. The force of impulsion came from on high. There was a Will in the Convention which was that of all and yet not that of any one person. This Will was an Idea, an idea indomitable and immeasurable, which swept from the summit of Heaven into the darkness below. We call this Revolution. When that Idea passed, it beat down one and raised up another; it scattered this man into foam and dashed that one upon the reefs. This Idea knew whither it was going, and drove the whirlpool before it. To ascribe the Revolution to men is to ascribe the tide to the waves.

The Revolution is a work of the Unknown. Call it good or bad, according as you yearn toward the future or the past, but leave it to the power which caused it. It seems the joint work of grand events and grand individualities mingled, but it is in reality the result of events. Events dispense; men suffer. Events dictate; men sign. The 14th of July is signed Camille Desmoulins; the 10th of August is signed Danton; the 2d of September is signed Marat; the 21st of September is signed Grégoire; the 21st of January is signed Robespierre; but Desmoulins, Danton, Marat, Grégoire, and Robespierre are mere scribes. The great and mysterious writer of these grand pages has a name—God; and a mask—Destiny. Robespierre believed in God—yea, verily!

The Revolution is a form of the eternal phenomenon which presses upon us from every quarter, and which we call Necessity.

Before this mysterious complication of benefits and sufferings arises the Wherefore of History.

Because—This answer of him who knows nothing is equally the response of him who knows all.

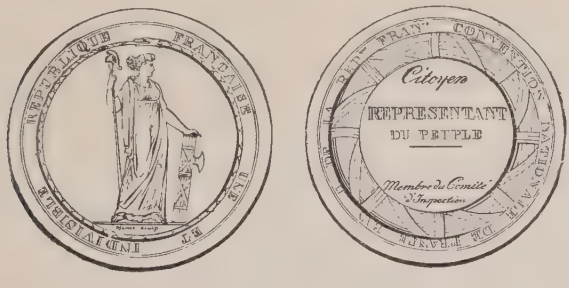
In presence of these climacteric catastrophes which devastate and revivify Civilization, one hesitates to judge their details. To blame or praise men on account of the result is almost like praising or blaming ciphers on account of the total. That which ought to happen happens; the blast which ought to blow blows. The Eternal Serenity does not suffer from these north winds. Above revolutions Truth and Justice remain as the starry sky lies above and beyond tempests.

CHAPTER XII

SUCH was the unmeasured and immeasurable Convention; a camp cut off from the human race, attacked by all the powers of darkness at once; the night-fires of the besieged army of Ideas; a vast bivouac of Minds upon the edge of a precipice. There is nothing in history comparable to this group, at the same time senate and populace, conclave and street-crossing, Areopagus and public square, tribunal and the accused.

The Convention always bent to the wind; but that wind came from the mouth of the people and was the breath of God.

And to-day, after eighty-four years have passed away, always when the Convention presents itself before the reflection of any man, whosoever he may be—historian or philosopher—that man pauses and meditates. It would be impossible not to remain thoughtfully attentive before this grand procession of shadows.



CHAPTER XIII

MARAT IN THE GREEN-ROOM

MARAT, in accordance with his declaration to Simonne Évrard, went to the Convention the morning after that interview in the Rue du Paon.

There was in the Convention a marquis who was a Maratist, Louis de Montaut, the same who afterward presented to the Convention a decimal clock surmounted by the bust of Marat.

At the moment Marat entered, Chabot had approached De Montaut. He began: "Ci-devant——"

Montaut raised his eyes. "Why do you call me ci-devant?"

"Because you are so."

"I?"

"For you were a marquis."

"Never."

"Bah!"

"My father was a soldier; my grandfather was a weaver."

"What song is that you are singing, Montaut?"

"I do not call myself Montaut."

"What do you call yourself then?"

"Maribon."

"In point of fact," said Chabot, "it is all the same to me." And he added between his teeth:

"No marquis on any terms."

Marat paused in the corridor to the left and watched Montaut and Chabot.

Whenever Marat entered, there was a buzz, but afar from him. About him people kept silence. Marat paid no attention thereto. He disdained "the croaking of the mud-pool."

In the gloomy obscurity of the lower row of seats, Conpé of the

Oise, Prunelle, Villars, a bishop who was afterward a member of the French Academy, Boutroue, Petit, Plaichard, Bonet, Thibaudeau, and Valdruche pointed him out to one another.

"See, Marat!"

"Then he is not ill?"

"Yes, for he is here in a dressing-gown."

"In a dressing-gown!"

"Zounds, yes!"

"He takes liberties enough!"

"He dares to come like that into the Convention!"

"As he came one day crowned with laurels, he may certainly come in a dressing-gown."

"Face of brass and teeth of verdigris."

"His dressing-gown looks new."

"What is it made of?"

"Reps."

"Striped."

"Look at the lapels."

"They are fur."

"Tiger skin."

"No; ermine."

"Imitation."

"He has stockings on!"

"That is odd."

"And shoes with buckles!"

"Of silver!"

"Camboulas's sabots will not pardon that."

People in other seats affected not to see Marat. They talked of indifferent matters. Santhonax accosted Dussaulx.

"Have you heard, Dussaulx?"

"What?"

"The ci-devant Count de Brienne?"

"Who was in La Force with the ci-devant Duke de Villeroy?"

"Yes."

"I knew them both. Well?"

"They were so horribly frightened that they saluted all the red caps of all the turnkeys, and one day they refused to play a game of piquet because somebody offered them cards that had kings and queens among them."

"Well?"

"They were guillotined yesterday."

"The two of them?"

"Both."

"Indeed; how had they behaved in prison?"

"As cowards."

"And how did they show on the scaffold?"

"Intrepid."

Then Dussaulx ejaculated:

"It is easier to die than to live!"

Barère was reading a report; it was in regard to the Vendée. Nine hundred men of Morbihan had started with cannon to assist Nantes. Redon was menaced by the peasants. Paimbœuf had been attacked. A fleet was cruising about Maindrin to prevent invasions. From Ingrande, as far as Maure, the entire left bank of the Loire was bristling with Royalist batteries. Three thousand peasants were masters of Pornic. They cried, "*Long live the English!*" A letter from Santerre to the Convention, which Barère was reading, ended with these words:

"Seven thousand peasants attacked Vannes. We repulsed them, and they have left in our hands four cannon——"

"And how many prisoners?" interrupted a voice.

Barère continued: "Postscript of the letter. 'We have no prisoners, because we no longer make any.'"*

Marat, standing motionless, did not listen; he appeared absorbed by a stern preoccupation.

He held in his hand a paper, which he crumpled between his fingers; had any one unfolded it, he might have read these lines in Momoro's writing—probably a response to some question he had been asked by Marat:

"No opposition can be offered to the full powers of delegated commissioners, above all, those of the Committee of Public Safety. Genissieux in vain said, in the sitting of May 6th, '*Each Commissioner is more than a king;*' it had no effect. Life and death are in their hands. Massade at Angers; Trullard at Saint-Amand; Nyon with General Marcé; Parrein with the army of Sables; Millier with the army of Niort: they are all-powerful. The Club of the Jacobins has gone so far as to name Parrein brigadier-general. The circumstances excuse every thing. A delegate from the Committee of Public Safety holds in check a commander-in-chief."

Marat ceased crumpling the paper, put it in his pocket, and walked slowly toward Montaut and Chabot, who continued to converse, and had not seen him enter.

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* *Moniteur*, vol. xix., p. 81.

Chabot was saying: "Maribon, or Montaut, listen to this: I have just come from the Committee of Public Safety."

"And what is being done there?"

"They are setting a priest to watch a noble."

"Ah!"

"A noble like yourself——"

"I am not a noble," interrupted Montaut.

"To be watched by a priest——"

"Like you."

"I am not a priest," said Chabot.

They both began to laugh.

"Make your story explicit," resumed Montaut.

"Here it is, then. A priest named Cimourdain is delegated with full powers to a viscount named Gauvain; this viscount commands the exploring column of the army of the coast. The question will be to keep the nobleman from trickery and the priest from treason."

"It is very simple," replied Montaut. "It is only necessary to bring death into the matter."

"I come for that," said Marat.

They looked up.

"Good morning, Marat," said Chabot. "You rarely attend our meetings."

"My doctor has ordered me baths," answered Marat.

"One should beware of baths," returned Chabot. "Seneca died in one."

Marat smiled.

"Chabot, there is no Nero here."

"Yes, there is you," said a rude voice.

It was Danton who passed and ascended to his seat.

Marat did not turn round. He thrust his head in between Montaut and Chabot.

"Listen; I come about a serious matter—one of us three must propose to-day the draft of a decree to the Convention."

"Not I," said Montaut; "I am never listened to. I am a marquis."

"And I," said Chabot—"I am not listened to. I am a Capuchin."

"And I," said Marat—"I am not listened to. I am Marat."

There was a silence among them.

It was not safe to interrogate Marat when he appeared preoccupied, still Montaut hazarded a question.

"Marat, what is the decree that you wish passed?"

"A decree to punish with death any military chief who allows a rebel prisoner to escape."

Chabot interrupted:

"The decree exists; it was passed in April."

"Then it is just the same as if it did not exist," said Marat. "Everywhere, all through Vendée, anybody who chooses helps prisoners to escape and gives them an asylum with impunity."

"Marat, the fact is, the decree has fallen into disuse."

"Chabot, it must be put into force anew."

"Without doubt."

"And to do that the Convention must be addressed."

"Marat, the Convention is not necessary; the Committee of Public Safety will suffice."

"The end will be gained," added Montaut, "if the Committee of Public Safety cause the decree to be placarded in all the communes of the Vendée, and make two or three good examples."

"Of men in high position," returned Chabot—"of generals."

Marat grumbled: "In fact, that will answer."

"Marat," resumed Chabot, "go yourself and say that to the Committee of Public Safety."

Marat stared straight into his eyes, which was not pleasant, even for Chabot.

"The Committee of Public Safety," said he, "sits in Robespierre's house—I do not go there."

"I will go myself," said Montaut.

"Good," said Marat.

The next morning an order from the Committee of Public Safety was sent in all directions among the towns and villages of Vendée, enjoining the publication and strict execution of the decree of death against any person conniving at the escape of brigands and captive insurgents. This decree proved only a first step: the Convention was to go further than that. A few months later, the 11th Brumaire, Year II. (November, 1793), when Laval opened its gates to the Vendean fugitives, the Convention decreed that any city giving asylum to the rebels should be demolished and destroyed. On their side, the princes of Europe, in the manifesto of the Duke of Brunswick, conceived by the emigrants and drawn up by the Marquis de Linnon, intendant of the Duke of Orleans, had declared that every Frenchman taken with arms in his hand should be shot, and that, if a hair of the king's head fell, Paris should be razed to the ground.

Cruelty against barbarity.

IN
VENDÉE

PART III

LA VENDÉE

BOOK I

LA VENDÉE

CHAPTER I

THE FORESTS

THERE were at that time seven ill-famed forests in Brittany. The Vendean war was a revolt of priests. This revolt had the forests as auxiliaries. These spirits of darkness aid one another.

The seven Black Forests of Brittany were the forest of Fougères, which stopped the way between Dol and Avranches; the forest of Princé, which was eight leagues in circumference; the forest of Paimpol, full of ravines and brooks, almost inaccessible on the side toward Baignon, with an easy retreat upon Concornet, which was a royalist town; the forest of Rennes, from whence could be heard the tocsin of the Republican parishes—always numerous in the neighborhood of the cities—it was in this forest that Puysaye lost Focard; the forest of Machecoul, which had Charette for its wild beast; the forest of Garnache, which belonged to the Trémoilles, the Gauvains, and the Rohans; and the forest of Brocéliande, which belonged to the fairies.

One gentleman of Brittany bore the title of Lord of the Seven Forests: this was the Viscount de Fontenay, Breton prince.

For the Breton prince existed distinct from the French prince. The Rohans were Breton princes. Garnier de Saintes, in his report to the Convention of the 15th Nivose, Year II., thus distinguishes the Prince de Talmont: "This Capet of the brigands, Sovereign of Maine and of Normandy."

The record of the Breton forests, from 1792 to 1800, would form a history of itself, mingling like a legend with the vast undertaking of the Vendée.

History has its truth: Legend has hers. Legendary truth is wholly different from historic. Legendary truth is invention that has reality for a result. Still history and legend have the same aim, that of depicting the external type of humanity.

La Vendée can only be completely understood by adding legend to history; the latter is needed to describe its entirety, the former the details.

We may say, too, that la Vendée is worth the pains. La Vendée was a prodigy.

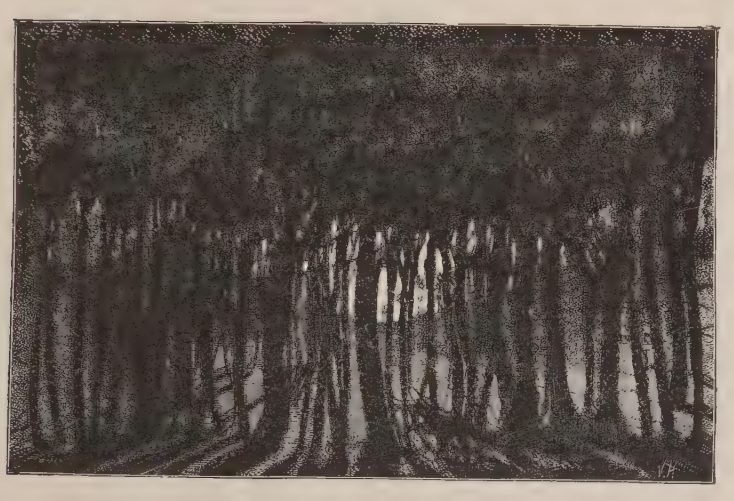
This war of the Ignorant, so stupid and so splendid, so abject yet magnificent, was at once the desolation and the pride of France. La Vendée is a wound which is at the same time a glory.

At certain crises human society has its enigmas—enigmas which resolve themselves into light for sages, but which the ignorant in their darkness translate into violence and barbarism. The philosopher is slow to accuse. He takes into consideration the agitation caused by these problems, which can not pass without casting about them shadows dark as those of the storm-cloud.

If one wish to comprehend Vendée, one must picture to one's self this antagonism: on one side the French Revolution, on the other the Breton peasant. In face of these unparalleled events—an immense promise of all benefits at once—a fit of rage for civilization—an excess of maddened progress—an improvement that exceeded measure and comprehension—must be placed this grave, strange, savage man, with an eagle glance and flowing hair, living on milk and chestnuts, his ideas bounded by his thatched roof, his hedge, and his ditch, able to distinguish the sound of each village bell in the neighborhood, using water only to drink, wearing a leather jacket covered with silken arabesques—uncultivated but clad embroidered—tattooing his garments as his ancestors the Celts had tattooed their faces, looking up to a master in his executioner, speaking a dead language, which was like forcing his thoughts to dwell in a tomb; driving his bullocks, sharpening his scythe, winnow-

ing his black grain, kneading his buckwheat biscuit, venerating his plow first, his grandmother next; believing in the Blessed Virgin and the White Lady; devoted to the altar, but also to the lofty mysterious stone standing in the midst of the moor; a laborer in the plain, a fisher on the coast, a poacher in the thicket, loving his kings, his lords, his priests, his very lice; pensive, often immovable for entire hours upon the great deserted sea-shore, a melancholy listener to the sea.

Then ask yourself if it would have been possible for this blind man to welcome that light.



CHAPTER II

THE PEASANTS

THE peasant had two points on which he leaned: the field which nourished him, the wood which concealed him.

It is difficult to picture to one's self what those Breton forests really were; they were towns. Nothing could be more secret, more silent, and more savage than those inextricable entanglements of thorns and branches; those vast thickets were the home of immobility and silence; no solitude could present an appearance more death-like and sepulchral; yet if it had been possible to fell those trees at one blow, as by a flash of lightning, a swarm of men would have stood revealed in those shades. There were wells, round and narrow, masked by coverings of stones and branches, the interior at first vertical, then horizontal, spreading out underground like funnels, and ending in dark chambers; Cambyses found such in Egypt, and Westermann found the same in Brittany. There they were found in the desert, here in the forest; the caves of Egypt held dead men, the caves of Brittany were filled with the living. One of the wildest glades of the wood of Misdon, perforated by galleries and cells amid which came and went a mysterious society, was called "the great city." Another glade, not less deserted above ground and not less inhabited beneath, was styled "the place royal." This subterranean life had existed in Brittany from time immemorial. From the earliest days man had there hidden, flying from man. Hence those hiding-places, like the dens of reptiles, hollowed out below the trees. They dated from the era of the Druids, and certain of those crypts were as ancient as the cromlechs. The larvæ of legend and the monsters of history all passed across that shadowy land. Teutates, Cæsar, Hoël, Neomenes, Geoffrey of England, Alain of the iron glove, Pierre Manclerc, the French house of Blois, the English house of Montfort, kings and dukes, the nine

LA VENDÉE
E. FROMENTIN
A. DE LAUNAY

barons of Brittany, the judges of the Great Days, the Counts of Nantes contesting with the Counts of Rennes, highwaymen, banditti, Free Lances, René II., Viscount de Rohan, the governors for the king, "the good Duke of Chaulnes," hanging the peasants under the windows of Madame de Sévigné; in the fifteenth century, the butcheries by the nobles; in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the wars of religion; in the eighteenth century, the thirty thousand dogs trained to hunt men. Beneath these pitiless tramplings the inhabitants made up their minds to disappear. Each in turn—the Troglodytes to escape the Celts, the Celts to escape the Romans, the Bretons to escape the Normans, the Huguenots to escape the Roman Catholics, the smugglers to escape the excise officers—took refuge first in the forests and then underground—the resource of hunted animals. It is this to which tyranny reduces nations. During two thousand years despotism under all its forms—conquest, feudality, fanaticism, taxes—beset this wretched, distracted Brittany: a sort of inexorable battue, which only ceased under one shape to recommence under another. Men hid underground. When the French Republic burst forth, Terror, which is a species of rage, was already latent in human souls, and when the Republic burst forth, the dens were ready in the woods. Brittany revolted, finding itself oppressed by this forced deliverance—a mistake natural to slaves.

CHAPTER III

CONNIVANCE OF MEN AND FORESTS

THE gloomy Breton forests took up anew their ancient rôle, and were the servants and accomplices of this rebellion, as they had been of all others. The subsoil of every forest was a sort of madrepore, pierced and traversed in all directions by a secret highway of mines, cells, and galleries. Each one of these blind cells could shelter five or six men. There are in existence certain strange lists which enable one to understand the powerful organization of that vast peasant rebellion. In Ille-et-Vilaine, in the forest of Pertre, the refuge of the Prince de Talmont, not a breath was heard, not a human trace to be found, yet there were collected six thousand men under Focard. In the forest of Meulac, in Morbihan, not a soul was to be seen, yet it held eight thousand men. Still, these two forests, Pertre and Meulac, do not count among the great Breton forests. If one trod there, the explosion was terrible. Those hypocritical copses, filled with fighters waiting in a sort of underground labyrinth, were like enormous black sponges, whence, under the pressure of the gigantic foot of Revolution, civil war spurted out.

Invisible battalions lay there in wait. These untrackable armies wound along beneath the Republican troops; burst suddenly forth from the earth and sank into it again, sprang up in numberless force and vanished at will, gifted with a strange ubiquity and power of disappearance; an avalanche at one instant, gone like a cloud of dust at the next; colossal, yet able to become pigmies at will; giants in battle, dwarfs in ability to conceal themselves—jaguars with the habits of moles.

There were not only the forests, there were the woods. Just as below cities there are villages, below these forests there were woods and underwoods.

The forests were united by the labyrinths (everywhere scattered) of

the woods. The ancient castles, which were fortresses, the hamlets, which were camps, the farms, which were inclosures for ambushes and

snares, traversed by ditches and palisaded by trees, were the meshes of the net in which the Republican armies were caught.

This whole formed what is called the *Bocage*.

There was the wood of Misdon, which had a pond in its centre, and which was held by Jean Chouan; there was the wood of Gennes, which belonged to Taillefer; there was the wood of Huisserie, which belonged to Gouge-le-Bruant; the wood of Charnie, where lurked Courtillé-le-Batard, called Saint-Paul, chief of the camp of the Vache Noire; the wood of Burgault, which was held by that enigmatical Monsieur Jacques, reserved for a mysterious end in the vault of Juvardeil; there was the wood of Charreau, where Pimousse and Petit-Prince, when attacked by the garrison of Châteauneuf, rushed forward and seized the grenadiers in the Republican ranks about the waist and carried them back prisoners; the wood of La Heureuserie, the witness of the rout of the military post of Longue-Faye; the wood of Aulne, whence the route between Rennes and Laval could be overlooked; the wood of La Gravelle, which a prince of La Trémoille had won at a game of bowls; the wood of Lorges, in the Cotes-du-Nord, where Charles de Boishardy reigned after Bernard de Villeneuve; the wood of Bagnard, near Fontenay, where Lescure offered battle to Chalbos, who accepted the challenge, although one against five; the wood of La Durondais, which in old days had been disputed by Alain le Redru and Hérispoux, the son of Charles the Bald; the wood of Croqueloup, upon the edge of that moor where Coquereau sheared the prisoners; the wood of Croix-Bataille, which witnessed the Homeric insults of Jambe d'Argent to Morière, and of Morière to Jambe d'Argent; the wood of La Saudraie, which we have seen being searched by a Paris regiment. There were many others besides. In several of these forests and woods there were not only subterranean villages grouped about the burrow of the chief, but also actual hamlets of low huts, hidden under the trees, sometimes so numerous that the forest was filled with them. Frequently they were betrayed by the smoke. Two of these hamlets of the wood of Misdon have remained famous: Lorrière near Létang, and the group of cabins called the Rue de Bau, on the side toward Saint-Ouen-les-Toits.

The women lived in the huts, and the men in the cellars. In carrying on the war, they utilized the galleries of the fairies and the old Celtic mines. Food was carried to the buried men. Some were forgotten and died of hunger; but these were awkward fellows who had not known how to open the mouth of their well. Usually the cover, made of moss and branches, was so artistically fashioned that, although impossible on the outside to distinguish from the surrounding turf, it was very easy to open and close on the inside. These hiding-places were dug with care. The earth taken out of the well was flung into some neighboring pond. The sides and the bottom were carpeted with

ferns and moss. These nooks were called "lodges." The men were as comfortable there as could be expected, considering that they lacked light, fire, bread, and air.

It was a difficult matter to unbury themselves and come up among the living without great precaution. They might find themselves between the legs of an army on the march. These were formidable woods; snares with a double trap. The Blues dared not enter; the Whites dared not come out.

CHAPTER IV

THEIR LIFE UNDERGROUND

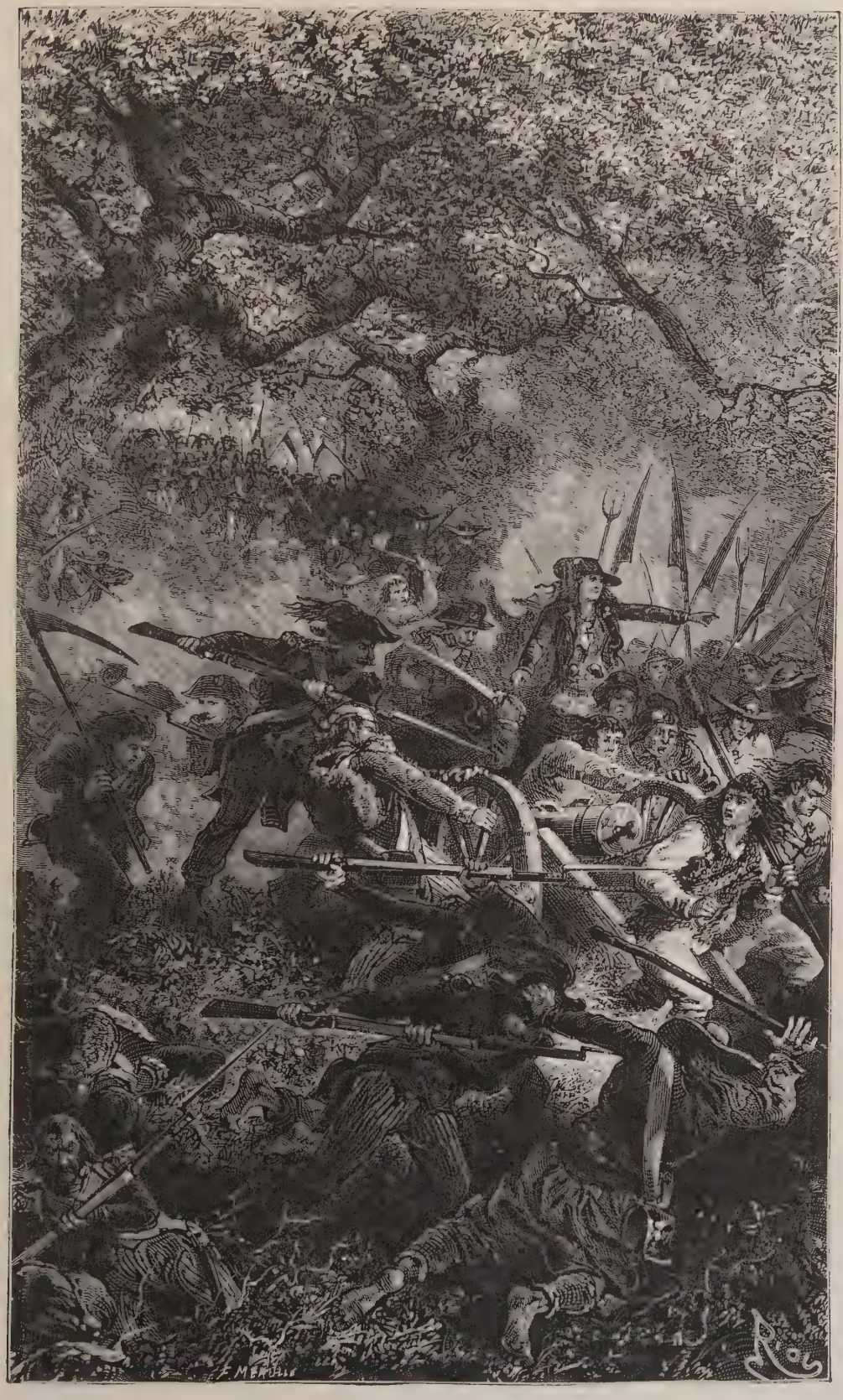
THE men grew weary of their wild-beast lairs. Sometimes in the night they came forth at any risk, and went to dance upon the neighboring moor, else they prayed, in order to kill time. "*Every day*," says Bourdoiseau, "*Jean Chouan made us count our rosaries.*"

It was almost impossible to keep those of the Bas-Maine from going out for the Fête de la Gerbe when the season came. Some of them had ideas peculiar to themselves. "Denys," says Tranche Montagne, "disguised himself as a woman, in order to go to the theatre at Laval, then went back into his hole."

Suddenly they would rush forth in search of death—exchanging the dungeon for the sepulchre.

Sometimes they raised the cover of their trench, and listened to hear if there were fighting in the distance; they followed the combat with their ears. The firing of the Republicans was regular; the firing of the Royalists, open and dropping: this guided them. If the platoon-firing ceased suddenly, it was a sign that the Royalists were defeated; if the irregular firing continued, and retreated toward the horizon, it was a sign that they had the advantage. The Whites always pursued; the Blues never, because they had the country against them.

These underground belligerents were kept perfectly informed of what was going on. Nothing could be more rapid, nothing more mysterious, than their means of communication. They had cut all the bridges, broken up all the wagons, yet they found means to tell each other every thing, to give each other timely warning. Relays of emissaries were established from forest to forest, from village to village, from farm to farm, from cottage to cottage, from bush to bush. A peasant with a stupid air passed by: he carried dispatches in his hollow stick.

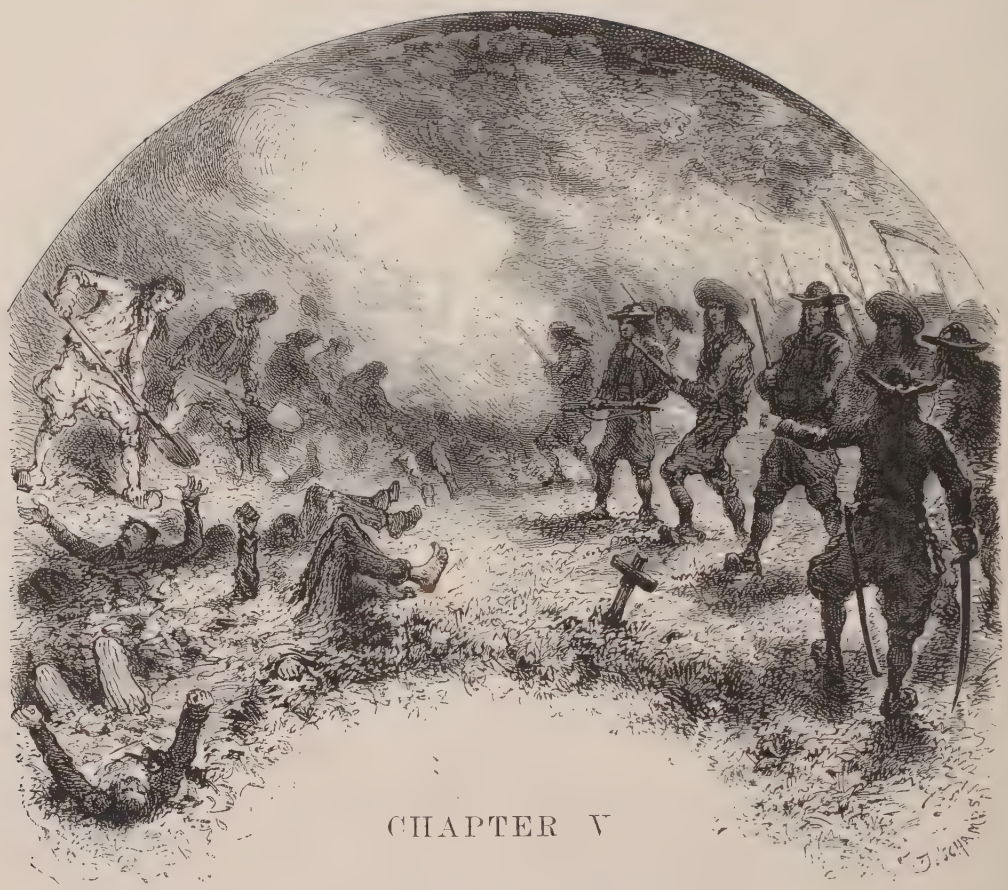


CATHELINEAU.

An ancient constituent, Boétidoux, furnished them, to pass from one end of Brittany to the other, with Republican passports according to the new form, with blanks for the names, of which this traitor had bundles. It was impossible to discover these emissaries. Says Puysaye: "*The secrets confided to more than four hundred thousand individuals were religiously guarded.*"

It appeared that this quadrilateral, closed on the south by the line of the Sables to Thouars, on the east by the line of Thouars to Saumur and the river of Thoué, on the north by the Loire, and on the west by the ocean, possessed everywhere the same nervous activity, and not a single point of this soil could stir without shaking the whole. In the twinkling of an eye Luçon had information in regard to Noirmoutier, and the camp of La Loué knew what the camp of Croix-Morineau was doing. It seemed as if the very birds of the air carried tidings. The 7th Messidor, year III., Hoche wrote: "*One might believe that they have telegraphs.*"

They were in clans, as in Scotland. Each parish had its captain. In that war my Father fought, and I can speak advisedly thereof.



CHAPTER V

THEIR LIFE IN WARFARE

MANY of them were only armed with pikes. Good fowling-pieces were abundant. No marksmen could be more expert than the poachers of the Bocage and the smugglers of the Loroux. They were strange combatants — terrible and intrepid. The decree for the levy of three hundred thousand men had been the signal for the tocsin to sound in six hundred villages. The blaze of the conflagration burst forth in all quarters at the same time. Poitou and Anjou exploded on one day. Let us add that a premonitory rumbling had made itself heard on the moor of Kerbader upon the 8th of July, 1792, a month before the 10th of August. Alain Redeler, to-day forgotten, was the precursor of La Rochejacquelein and Jean Chouan. The Royalists forced all able-bodied men to march under pain of death. They requisitioned harnesses, carts, and provisions. At once Sapinaud had three thousand soldiers, Cathelineau ten thousand, Stofflet twenty thousand, and Charette was master of Noirmoutier. The Viscount de Scépeaux roused the Haut Anjou; the Chevalier de Dieuzie, the Entre

CHARETTE AND THE REPRESENTATIVES OF THE PEOPLE.

Vilaine et Loire; Tristan l'Hermite, the Bas-Maine; the barber Gaston, the city of Guéménée; and Abbé Bernier all the rest. It needed but little to rouse all those multitudes. In the altar of a priest who had taken the oath to the republic—a "priest swearer," as the people said—was placed a great black cat, which sprang suddenly out during mass. "*It is the devil!*" cried the peasants, and a whole canton rose in revolt. A breath of fire issued from the confessionals. In order to attack the Blues and to leap the ravines, they had their poles fifteen feet in length, called *ferte*, an arm available for combat and for flight. In the thickest of the frays, when the peasants were attacking the Republican squares, if they chanced to meet upon the battle-field a cross or a chapel, all fell upon their knees and said a prayer under the enemy's fire; the rosary counted, such as were still living sprang up again and rushed upon the foe. Alas, what giants! They loaded their guns as they ran; that was their peculiar talent. They were made to believe whatever their leaders chose. The priests showed them other priests whose necks had been reddened by means of a cord, and said to them, "*These are the guillotined who have been brought back to life.*" They had their spasms of chivalry: they honored Fesque, a Republican standard-bearer, who allowed himself to be sabred without losing hold of his flag. The peasants had a vein of mockery: they called the Republican and married priests "*Des sans-calottes devenus sans-culottes*" ("*The un-petticoated become the unbreeched*").

They began by being afraid of the cannon, then they dashed forward with their sticks and took them. They captured first a fine bronze cannon, which they baptized "*The Missionary*;" then another which dated from the Roman Catholic wars, upon which were engraved the arms of Richelieu and a head of the Virgin; this they named "*Marie Jeanne.*" When they lost Fontenay they lost Marie Jeanne, about which six hundred peasants fell without flinching; then they retook Fontenay in order to recover Marie Jeanne: they brought it back beneath a *fleur-de-lis* embroidered banner, and covered with flowers, and forced the women who passed to kiss it. But two cannons were a small store. Stofflet had taken Marie Jeanne; Cathelineau, jealous of his success, started out of Pin-en-Mange, assaulted Jallais, and captured a third. Forest attacked Saint-Florent and took a fourth. Two other captains, Chouppes and Saint Pol, did better; they simulated cannons by the trunks of trees, gunners by mannikins, and with this artillery, about which they laughed heartily, made the Blues retreat to Mareuil. This was their great era. Later, when Chalbos routed La Marsonnière, the peasants left behind them on the dishonored field of battle thirty-two cannon bearing the arms of England. England at that time paid the

French princes, and, as Nantiat wrote on the 10th of May, 1794, "sent funds to Monseigneur, because Pitt had been told that it was proper so to do."

Mellinet, in a report of the 31st of March, said, "'*Long live the English*,' is the cry of the rebels!" The peasants delayed themselves by pillage. These devotees were robbers. Savages have their vices. It is by these that civilization captures them later. Puysaye says, vol. ii., page 187: "I several times preserved the burg of Phélan from pillage." And further on, page 434, he recounts how he avoided entering Montfort: "I made a circuit in order to prevent the plundering of the Jacobins' houses."

They robbed Cholet; they sacked Challans. After having failed at Granville, they pillaged Ville-Dieu. They styled the "*Jacobin herd*" those of the country people who had joined the Blues, and exterminated such with more ferocity than other foes. They loved battle like soldiers, and massacre like brigands. To shoot the "clumsy fellows"—that is, the bourgeois—pleased them: they called that "breaking Lent." At Fontenay, one of their priests, the Curé Barbotin, struck down an old man by a sabre stroke. At Saint-Germain-sur-Ille, one of their captains, a nobleman, shot the solicitor of the commune and took his watch. At Machecoul, for five weeks they shot Republicans at the rate of thirty a day, setting them in a row, which was called "the rosary." Back of the line was a trench, into which some of the victims fell alive; they were buried all the same. We have seen a revival of such actions. Joubert, the president of the district, had his hands sawed off. They put sharp handcuffs, forged expressly, on the Blues whom they made prisoners. They massacred them in the public places, with the hunting cry, "In at the death."

Charette, who signed "*Fraternity, the Chevalier Charette*," and who wore for head-covering a handkerchief knotted about his brows after Marat's fashion, burned the city of Pornic, and the inhabitants in their houses. During that time Carrier was horrible. Terror replied to terror. The Breton insurgent had almost the appearance of a Greek rebel, with his short jacket, his gun slung over his shoulder, his leggings, and large breeches similar to the fustanella. The peasant lad resembled the klepht.

Henri de la Rochejacquelein, at the age of one-and-twenty, set out for this war armed with a stick and a pair of pistols. The Vendean army counted a hundred and fifty-four divisions. They undertook regular sieges; they held Bressuire invested for three days. One Good Friday ten thousand peasants cannonaded the town of Sables with red-hot balls. They succeeded in a single day in destroy-

ing fourteen Republican cantons, from Montigné to Courbeveilles. On the high wall of Thouars this dialogue was heard between La Rochejacquelein and a peasant lad as they stood below:

"Charles!"

"Here I am."

CHARETTE.

"Stand so that I can mount on your shoulders."

"Jump up."

"Your gun."

"Take it."

And Rochejacquelein leaped into the town, and the towers which Duguesclin had besieged were taken without the aid of ladders. They preferred a cartridge to a gold louis. They wept when they lost sight of their village belfry. To run away seemed perfectly natural to them;

at such times the leaders would cry: "*Throw off your sabots, but keep your guns.*" When munitions were wanting, they counted their rosaries and rushed forth to seize the powder in the caissons of the Republican artillery; later, D'Elbée demanded powder from the English. If they had wounded men among them, at the approach of the enemy they concealed these in the grain-fields or among the ferns, and went back in search of them when the fight was ended. They had no uniforms.

Their garments were torn to bits. Peasants and nobles wrapped themselves in any rags they could find. Roger Mouliniers wore a turban and a pelisse taken from the wardrobe of the theatre of La Flèche; the Chevalier de Beauvilliers wore a barrister's gown, and set a woman's bonnet on his head over a woolen cap. All wore the white belt and a scarf; different grades were marked by the knots. Stofflet had a red knot; La Rochejacquelein had a black knot; Wimpfen, who was half a Girondist, and who for that matter never left Normandy, wore the leather jacket of the Carabots of Caen. They had women in their ranks: Madame de Lescure, who became Madame de la Rochejacquelein;

Thérèse de Mollien, the mistress of La Rouarie—she who burned the list of the chiefs of the parishes; Madame de la Rochefoucauld—beautiful, young—who, sabre in hand, rallied the peasants at the foot of the great tower of the castle of Puy Rousseau; and that Antoinette Adams, styled the Chevalier Adams, who was so brave that when captured she was shot standing, out of respect for her courage.

This epic period was a cruel one. Men were mad. Madame de Lescure made her horse tread upon the Republicans stretched on the ground; *dead*, she averred; only wounded perhaps. Sometimes the men proved traitors; the women, never. Mademoiselle Fleury, of the Théâtre Français, went from La Rouarie to Marat, but it was for love. The captains were often as ignorant as the soldiers. Monsieur de Sapinaud could not spell; he was at fault in regard to the orthography of the commonest word. There was enmity among the leaders. The captains of the Marais cried: "*Down with those of the High Country!*" Their cavalry was not numerous and difficult to form. Puysaye writes: "*Many a man who would cheerfully give me his two sons grows lukewarm if I ask for one of his horses.*" Poles, pitchforks, reaping-hooks, guns, old and new, poachers' knives, spits, cudgels bound and studded with iron, these were their arms; some of them carried slung round them crosses made of dead men's bones.

They rushed to an attack with loud cries, springing up suddenly from every quarter, from the woods, the hills, the bushes, the hollows of the roads, killing, exterminating, destroying, then were gone. When they marched through a Republican town they cut down the liberty pole, set it on fire, and danced in circles about it as it burned. All their habits were nocturnal. The Vendean rule was, always to appear unexpectedly. They would march fifteen leagues in silence, not so much as stirring a blade of grass as they went. When evening came, after the chiefs had settled what Republican posts should be surprised on the morrow, the men loaded their guns, mumbled their prayers, pulled off their sabots, and filed in long columns through the woods, marching barefoot across the heath and moss, without a sound, without a word, without a breath. It was like the march of cats through the darkness.

CHAPTER VI

THE SPIRIT OF THE PLACE PASSES INTO THE MAN

THE Vendée in insurrection did not number less than five hundred thousand, counting men, women, and children. A half-million of combatants is the sum total given by Tuffin de la Rouarie.

The Federalists helped them; the Vendée had the Gironde for accomplice. La Lozère sent thirty thousand men into the Bocage. Eight departments coalesced: five in Brittany, three in Normandy. Evreux, which fraternized with Caen, was represented in the rebellion by Chaumont, its mayor, and Gardembas, a man of note. Buzot, Gorsas, and Barbaroux, at Caen; Brissot, at Moulins; Chassan, at Lyons; Rabaut-Saint-Étienne, at Nismes; Meillen and Duchâtel, in Brittany: all these mouths blew the furnace.

There were two Vendées: the great, which carried on the war of the forests, and the little, which waged the war of the thickets; it is that shade which separates Charette from Jean Chouan. The little Vendée was honest, the great corrupt; the little was much better. Charette was made a Marquis, Lieutenant-General of the king's armies, and received the great cross of Saint Louis; Jean Chouan remained Jean Chouan. Charette borders on the bandit; Jean Chouan on the paladin.

As to the magnanimous chiefs—Bonchamps, Lescure, La Rochejacquelein—they deceived themselves. The grand Catholic Army was an insane attempt; disaster could not fail to follow it. Let any one imagine a tempest of peasants attacking Paris, a coalition of villages besieging the Pantheon, a troop of herdsmen flinging themselves upon a host governed by the light of intellect. Le Mans and Savenay chastised this madness. It was impossible for the Vendée to cross the Loire. She could do every thing except that leap. Civil war does not conquer. To

pass the Rhine establishes a Cæsar and strengthens a Napoleon; to cross the Loire killed La Rochejacquelein. The real strength of Vendée was Vendée at home; there she was invulnerable, unconquerable. The Vendean at home was smuggler, laborer, soldier, shepherd, poacher, sharpshooter, goatherd, bell-ringer, peasant, spy, assassin, sacristan, wild beast of the wood.

La Rochejacquelein is only Achilles; Jean Chouan is Proteus.

The rebellion of the Vendée failed. Other revolts have succeeded: that of Switzerland, for example. There is this difference between the

mountain insurgent like the Swiss and the forest insurgent like the Vendean, that almost always the one fights for an ideal, the other for a prejudice. The one soars, the other crawls. The one combats for humanity, the other for solitude. The one desires liberty, the other wishes isolation. The one defends the commune, the other the parish. "Communes! Communes!" cried the heroes of Morat. The one has to deal with precipices, the other with quagmires; the one is the man of torrents and foaming streams, the other of stagnant puddles, where pestilence lurks; the one has his head in the blue sky, the other in the thicket; the one is on a summit, the other in a shadow.

The education of heights and shallows is very different. The mountain is a citadel; the forest is an ambuscade: the one inspires audacity, the other teaches trickery. Antiquity placed the gods on

heights and the satyrs in copses. The satyr is the savage, half-man, half-brute. Free countries have Apennines, Alps, Pyrenees, and Olympus. Parnassus is a mountain. Mont Blanc is the colossal auxiliary of William Tell. Below and above those immense struggles of souls against the night which fills the poems of India, the Himalayas may be seen. Greece, Spain, Italy, Helvetia have for their likeness the mountain; Cimmeria, Germany or Brittany has the wood. The forest is barbarous.

The configuration of soil decides many of man's actions. The earth is more his accomplice than people believe. In presence of certain savage landscapes one is tempted to exonerate man and criminate creation; one feels a certain hidden provocation on the part of nature; the desert is sometimes unhealthy for the conscience, especially for the conscience that is little illuminated; conscience may be a giant—then she produces a Socrates, a Christ; she may be a dwarf—then she moulds Atreus and Judas. The narrow conscience becomes quickly reptile in its instincts; forests where twilight reigns, the bushes, the thorns, the marshes beneath the branches, all have a fatal attraction for her; she undergoes the mysterious infiltration of evil persuasions. Optical illusions, unexplained mirages, the terrors of the hour or the scene, throw man into this sort of fright, half-religious, half-bestial, which engenders superstition in ordinary times, and brutality at violent epochs. Hallucinations hold the torch which lights the road to murder. The brigand is dizzied by a vertigo. Nature in her immensity has a double meaning, which dazzles great minds and blinds savage souls. When man is ignorant, when his desert is peopled with visions, the obscurity of solitude adds itself to the obscurity of intelligence; hence come depths in the human soul black and profound as an abyss. Certain rocks, certain ravines, certain thickets, certain wild openings in the trees through which night looks down, push men on to mad and atrocious actions. One might almost say that there are places which are the home of the spirit of evil.

How many tragic sights have been watched by the sombre hill between Baignon and Plélan!

Vast horizons lead the soul on to wide, general ideas; circumscribed horizons engender narrow, one-sided conceptions, which condemn great hearts to be little in point of soul. Jean Chouan was an example of this truth. Broad ideas are hated by partial ideas; this is in fact the struggle of progress.

Neighborhood—Country. These two words sum up the whole of the Vendean war: a quarrel of the local idea against the universal; of the peasant against the patriot.

CHAPTER VII

LA VENDÉE ENDED BRITTANY

BRITTANY is an ancient rebel. Each time she revolted during two thousand years she was in the right; but the last time she was wrong. Still at bottom—against the revolution as against monarchy, against the acting representatives as against governing dukes and peers, against the rule of assignats as against the sway of excise officers; whosoever might be the men that fought, Nicolas Rapin, François de la Noue, Captain Pluviaut, and the Lady of La Garnache or Stofflet, Coquereau, and Lechandelier de Pierreville; under De Rohan against the king and under La Rochejacquelein for the king—it was always the same war that Brittany waged—the war of the Local Spirit against the Central.

Those ancient provinces were ponds; that stagnant water could not bear to flow; the wind which swept across did not revivify—it irritated them.

Finisterre formed the bounds of France: there the space given to man ended, and the march of generations stopped. "Halt!" the ocean cried to the land, to barbarism and to civilization. Each time that the centre—Paris—gives an impulse, whether that impulse come from royalty or republicanism, whether it be in the interest of despotism or liberty, it is something New, and Brittany bristles up against it. "Leave us in peace! What is it they want of us?" The Marais seizes the pitchfork, the Bocage its carbine. All our attempts, our initiative movement in legislation and in education, our encyclopedias, our philosophies, our genius, our glories, all fail before the Houroux; the tocsin of Bazouges menaces the French Revolution, the moor of Faou rises in rebellion against the voice of our towns, and the bell of the Haut-des-Prés declares war against the Tower of the Louvre.

Terrible blindness!

The Vendean insurrection was the result of a fatal misunderstanding.

A colossal scuffle, a jangling of Titans, an immeasurable rebellion, destined to leave in history only one word—the Vendée—word illustrious yet dark; committing suicide for the absent, devoted to egotism, passing its time in making to cowardice the offer of a boundless bravery; without calculation, without strategy, without tactics, without plan, without aim, without chief, without responsibility; showing to what extent Will can be impotent; chivalric and savage; absurdity at its climax, a building up a barrier of black shadows against the light;

ignorance making a long resistance at once idiotic and superb against justice, right, reason, and deliverance; the terror of eight years, the rendering desolate fourteen departments, the devastation of fields, the destruction of harvests, the burning of villages, the ruin of cities, the pillage of houses, the massacre of women and children, the torch in the thatch, the sword in the heart, the terror of civilization, the hope of Mr. Pitt: such was this war, the unreasoning effort of the parricide.

In short, by proving the necessity of perforating in every direction the old Breton shadows, and piercing this thicket with arrows of light from every quarter at once, the Vendée served Progress. The catastrophes had their uses.

END OF VOLUME I.